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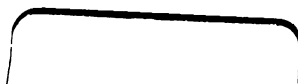
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KING LAZARUS



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KING LAZARUS.



KING LAZARUS.

KING LAZARUS.

A Novel.

BY
LEITH DERWENT,

AUTHOR OF "OUR LADY OF TEARS."

"Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere,
Destroyer and Preserver!"

SHELLEY.

"Oh! breathe not his name, let it sleep in the shade
Where cold and unhonoured his relics are laid;
Sad, silent, and dark be the tears that we shed——"

MOORE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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KING LAZAR

CHAPTER I
THE ARMY OF LAZAR

On the afternoon of Sunday the 10th of May, 1871, the Versailles troops, after the wrecked defences of Antwerp, to their surprise, a man place himself in great hazard of his life in a gap in the Porte de St. Cloud he found that there was now a breach in the wall. The besiegers were at the breach, and he was seen. He was seen by the forces outside the city. He was suspected, and he was suspected by the officers in command. At this point all the entreaties

KING LAZARUS.



CHAPTER I.

THE AGONY OF LAZARUS.

ON the afternoon of Sunday the twenty-first of May, 1871, the Versailles troops nearest the wrecked defences of Auteuil saw, to their surprise, a man place himself at the great hazard of his life in a gap where the Porte de St. Cloud had once been, and where was now a breach that the batteries of the besiegers were at the moment busily enlarging. He was seen to be signalling to the forces outside the *enceinte*; but a snare was suspected, and for some time the officers in command of the Versailles forces at this point allowed no notice to be taken of the entreaties that the stranger was



evidently making to the besiegers to advance. At last Trèves, an officer of the French navy, crept carefully forward; and was presently within hail of the shell-swept ruins where the hardy adventurer stood waving a handkerchief as if to invite a parley.

“What is it?” he shouted. “Do you surrender?”

An instant of expectation followed; and then, faintly heard over the roar of the batteries, and the incessant bursting of shells, came the reply; “Get your men together and enter. This part of the ramparts is abandoned.”

By noon on Monday the Versailles forces were surging in a living torrent through the gateway that the neglect or cowardice of the besieged and the heroism of a sympathizer had thus flung open to them; and the Commune, after a wild effort or two to beat them back, lost heart, and retreated on its last strongholds, the hilly ground of Belleville and Montmartre. Tuesday saw the artillery-bristling position of Montmartre,

the fire from which might in forty-eight hours have laid great part of Paris in ashes, carried by a rush of the troops of Generals Ladmirault and Clinchant. Until this supreme moment of disaster the insurgents had fought half-heartedly, and with an eye to retreat; but now that steel and fire hemmed them round, and the sole choice given them was to fall fighting to the last, or be shot down after surrender in the wholesale slaughters that De Gallifet and other butcherly heroes of the attacking army had already inaugurated, the wolves of the Commune prepared themselves grimly and ferociously to die.

There was discord as of hell in Paris when, on the night of the 23rd, three debauchees whom the morrow was to make murderers, met for a last orgie at the restaurant where for some two months now, they had been accustomed, after playing their day's part in the drama of the Commune and taking afterwards such diversion as the theatre could afford them, to sup in the company of the frailest of the Parisian



actresses. The last debate of the insurgent Assembly had been held on the evening of Sunday; and the sixty or seventy members of the Commune were now scattered, never to be brought together again; and did each 'that which seemed good in his own sight.' To the drunken eyes of the chief of police, and his lieutenants, Protot and Ferré, it seemed good that, abandoning arson to desperadoes of a mood a degree less tigerish, they, the representatives of the foulest ruffianism of the Commune, should be busy during its last hours in the murder of the prisoners in their hands. With the burning Tuileries (to which fire had been put that afternoon by Bergeret) as the torch that lighted their deliberations, the three planned, over the songs and riot of their last debauch, the slaughter for the morrow of the hostages confined in the prison of La Roquette.

About the same time that Rigault, the foul type of whatever was debauched or blood-thirsty in the insurrection, was sitting beside his mistress, arranging, champagne-

glass in hand, the details of the last and worst of his crimes, Delescluze, the one heroic figure of the Commune, was preparing for the sacrifice, not of other lives, but of his own. "*Si la Révolution succombe encore une fois,*" he had declared on the 22nd of January, when a volley from the Hôtel de Ville crushed an intended insurrection at the outset, "*je ne lui survivrai pas.*" The time for fulfilling that oath or breaking it had now arrived; and, taking his hat and stick, the infirm old man, his body enfeebled by age and the long and desolate years that he had spent in the prisons of the Empire, and under the burning sun of Cayenne, crept out of the Ministry of War, where he had succeeded Vincent and Roland, to seek death on the nearest barricade. Born of the people, and a passionate believer in the divine right of democracy, Delescluze had been dying daily for forty years that the cause for which he martyred himself might live. Had there been among the men who slew him aught that was gallant or humane, the dead body of the brave, defeated fanatic



would have been shrouded, as soon as discovered, in the red flag under which he had fought and fallen, and laid with the honours due to an enemy whose life and death had both been gallant, in a soldier's grave. As brutal, however, as ferocious, the Versailles troops, for nearly a week after his corpse had been dragged out, mutilated and hideous, from beneath a barricade, reserved it as a show for the bourgeois world of Paris to crowd to look at; and the abject Party of Order, trooping merrily from the cellars where they had hidden themselves while the noise of the fighting rolled past, felt their hearts grow great again as they feasted their eyes on the gashed body and grey, blood-bedabbled hairs of the fallen Jacobin, and chattered jests and insults into the deaf ears of the dead.

Moving with the slow step and bent head of a man who, on the way to seek death, retraced year by year the actions of his life, this last of the insurgent Ministers of War arrived presently at a barricade near the Château d'Eau, where fierce fighting was

going on. He was received with enthusiastic acclamations by the insurgents who manned it; and, seeing this, a woman whose husband had been forced at the rifle's muzzle (as numbers were forced in those death-days of the insurrection) to take the coat and weapon of a slain National Guard and fight among his comrades, ran to him, and begged frantically for the release of this unwilling combatant. The old man looked at her with some attention. "You are an Englishwoman," he said. "Your husband—is he English also?"

"Oh, sir," said the lady, "it's not his fault that he's English. He'd be a Frenchman, if he could. I'm sure, he'll be of any country you like, if you'll only let him go."

"Bring him to me," Delescluze commanded.

A little bald-headed man of about forty, whose hands and body shook with fright, and who stared at the chassepot that he was mechanically loading and firing, as if unable to see in it anything more than a portion of

a hideous dream, was dragged down from the barricade, and hurried to him.

“Of which party are you?” asked the Minister of War. “You are fighting on the side of the people—is it of your own free will that you do this, or of compulsion?”

Sprott, whose tongue clave to the roof of his mouth and whose teeth chattered in an agony of fear, stared at him idiotically, and shook his head. “I don’t know,” he stammered.

“At least,” said Delescluze, noting with evident contempt the condition of the man before him, “you know—unless the firing has frightened you out of all reason as well as all manhood—what principles you have brought with you across the Channel. Are they such as we contend for here—principles of resistance to kings and other tyrants?—or are they those of abject submission to them?”

Almost beside himself with panic and bewilderment, the unlucky wretch before him made a confused effort to reply to a question, of which his terror would let him

comprehend only that it related in some way to royalty. "God save the Queen! No, no, that's not it," he stammered; "I'm in France—*Vive l'Empereur!*"

The insurgents about him set up a howl of fury; and but for the prompt interference of Delescluze he would have lain dead in another instant among the fissures of the torn-up pavement.

"Patience, brothers, patience!" the old Jacobin said, with energy. He turned to the offender, and snatched his chasseur from him. "See!" he said, "the poor wretch is stupid with fear. If you shoot him, it is but so many good cartridges wasted. The firing has frightened him out of his senses; let us leave him his worthless life, at least. He does not even know that it is in danger; or he would be on his knees now, begging for it. An Imperialist?" in answer to some murmurs from those around him; "bah! he will cry whatever you please—Cry '*Vive la Commune!*'" he added to the trembling wretch beside him.

Some dim sense of the terrible blunder

that he had committed was stealing by this time across the confused mind of the man whom Delescluze addressed. He gasped out the watchword indicated.

“Louder, citizen,” said Delescluze.

“*Vive la Commune!*” Sprott cried, lustily.

“*Va! poltron,*” said the old revolutionist, thrusting him contemptuously aside. “Take thy white lips and coward’s face back with thee to thy own side of the Channel, and thank our mercy.”

Before the terrified English couple could disengage themselves from the crowd around the barricade, who impeded the retreat of the supposed Imperialist with blows and kicks, there was a rush of Versaillais from a side street, and the defenders of the improvised fortification found themselves taken at once in rear and in front. “*À mort! à mort!*” their assailants shouted, hoarsely. “No quarter to the brigands who have fired the Tuileries!—*À mort!*”

For a moment the figure of Delescluze was seen standing high on the barricade,

and his voice rose clear and fearless in encouragement to the entrapped Communists to die fighting desperately; then, breaking off with a gurgling sob in the midst of a shout that was choked by the passing of two bullets through chest and throat, the old man pitched heavily forward, and lay lifeless in the street. A cry of despair and fury rose from the nearest of the Communists as they saw the fall of their leader, and springing forward like wild beasts, they engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with the Versaillais. Quarter was neither asked nor given; and only those fortunate enough to have been at some distance from the barricade when the rush of the regulars took place had any chance of flight.

Wedged tightly among the foremost of these fugitives, the half-dead Sprott and his wife were carried on in the rush of fliers as helplessly as straws down the gutter (set running by this time with blood) in which they at the moment trampled. They were recognized at the next barricade, and the husband instantly seized upon; and there



being some dispute as to whether he should be shot on the spot, or the wish of Delescluze, that his life should be spared, respected, he was in the end, only dragged before Raoul Rigault, that his fate might be left to the decision of that ruffian.

“A spy!—an Imperialist!” echoed the ferocious Chief of Police, when he came cursing out to know what was wanted of him. “Is not the s—— Empire dead yet, then? Take the brigand to La Roquette, and put him for the night in a cell with one of those pigs of priests. To-night he can confess himself to the holy father, and in the morning Mère Chassepot will absolve them both.”

With this death-threat ringing in his ears, the prisoner was dragged off to the sinister building whither the unhappy Archbishop and his companions had been brought from Mazas, and were now penned in readiness for their approaching slaughter. His wife, whom the National Guards that escorted her husband thrust brutally back from the prison gate, broke into hysterical

shriek after shriek as it was closed between them ; and then looked wildly across the street towards the cemetery of Père la Chaise. " O, my God ! " she said, sobbing, " he'll be there to-morrow—that is, if they give him a grave. O, my husband !—my poor husband ! "

Among the National Guards who looked on as the prisoner was brought into La Roquette, was one in the uniform of an officer who, instantly recognizing him, drew back among the rest to avoid being recognized in his turn. After remaining for a few days in hospital, Clifford had been sent, by order of Eudes, to the Prefecture of Police ; and at the moment of the entry of the Versailles forces through the breach at Auteuil was still incarcerated among the political prisoners with whom that building was crowded. In the agony of its death-struggles, the Commune had little time to waste on the examination of asserted plotters. The young captain of National Guards whom General Eudes charged with having planned the betrayal of Issy was never sent for to



the Hôtel de Ville ; and when, on the early morning of Monday, the 22nd, he at last left his prison, it was in consequence of an order of Rigault that the prisoners confined in the Prefecture should be employed in making barricades. Towards evening, an attack by the Versaillais gave rise to an opportunity of escaping ; and Clifford, among others, availed himself of it.

He had learned, while imprisoned at the Prefecture, that Louis Roland, whom his hopes had conjectured as having snatched by this time the dictatorship of the insurrection, was tottering on no such dizzy pinnacle of authority, but a fugitive from Paris and the Commune. Delescluze, whom he heard had replaced the deserter at the Ministry of War, was, however, a man for whom he had considerable esteem ; and he now betook himself to him, and with the greater confidence, that the old Jacobin was the declared opponent of Raoul Rigault.

In a vast room of the Ministry of War the feeble figure of the doomed revolutionist was seen bending over a map of Paris, as

Clifford entered. Vincent, liberated since yesterday from his confinement in Mazas, sat beside him, offering his advice regarding the construction of barricades. There was no sentinel placed at the door; and out of the whole building not a dozen National Guards could have been collected. In the deserted aspect of the Ministry, and still more plainly upon the haggard face of the Minister, was to be seen written, "All is lost!"

Impatient of any interruption to his gloomy thoughts, Delescluze listened to the first words addressed to him with the look of a man whose mind was elsewhere, and then waved his hand to interrupt. "Eudes! Eudes!" he said, querulously, "always complaints of Eudes! And what time is this for seeking for lost friends? Take a rifle, citizen—take a rifle; and go with your comrades to the barricades."

Vincent, who had been staring intently at the visitor, now interfered. "The deuce! comrade," he said to Clifford, "I should know you, I think. You are the young

Englishman, are you not, that Roland pressed me to send to Issy?"

"Yes, general," said the other, "you sent me to Issy."

"Ah! I should have had a few more like you there," said the general, "and then the fort would not have been evacuated. You stuck to your post, I remember, when Méry—*Sacrebleu!* what a coward the fellow was! I remember saying to him, when I found him skulking in the darkest corner of a casemate, '*Peste!* commandant, you are cool enough here, but it's not the sort of coolness the Commune expects from you.' What has Eudes done to you, do you say? Robbed you of your mistress?"

"Yes," he said, with a sneer, to Clifford's answer, "you English translate *amie* as friend, I know. Well, we will see what can be done."

He took a sheet of paper, and scratched a line or two on it. "If Eudes sent your *chère amie* to Rigault," he said, "she may be in La Roquette. Here is an order to the citizen in charge of the prison to sur-



render her to you." He signed it himself, pressed Delescluze to add his name, and then handed Clifford the paper.

The other thanked him, and was leaving.

"Stay, though," said the general; "this may be waste paper; it may be Eudes himself who knows best where she is." He laughed as he noted the expression that crossed the other's face. "Patience!" he said, "and let us have the truth out of the scoundrel; it will be time enough afterwards to think of putting a bullet into that skull of his. *Parbleu!* such a head as Eudes carries on his shoulders would be no loss to the Commune. Wait in the ante-room for me; I shall pass the Palace of the Legion of Honour when I leave here, and it is there that he has his headquarters."

He was laughing again when he came out of the Palace of the Legion of Honour, and rejoined Clifford.

"Peste! comrade," he said, "is it the tigress you are seeking, who came to the Ministry of War just before *ce cher* Roland

supplanted me there, and asked for him? She was his sister—cousin—what was it he told me she was? Well, I bear no malice. Eudes tells me that she is for the present the guest of the citizen Rigault.

“At La Roquette?”

“At La Roquette, comrade. The scoundrel might have shown better taste than to quarter her among those old women of priests. But it seems that he did offer her other quarters at first, and it was only when she refused them that he sent her in a rage to cool her hot temper in La Roquette.”

“Good night, general, and thank you,” Clifford said, hurrying off.

Arrived presently at La Roquette, he found that the Communist governor of the place was sleeping off a drunken debauch, and in no condition to be disturbed till morning. It was now midnight; and having with little difficulty obtained permission to remain for the night in a building already sinister with the shadow of an approaching crime, the young man

laid himself down on a bench, and snatched an hour or two of sleep. At an early hour the next morning he sought the governor, and presented his credentials. The functionary before him, a creature of Rigault's, read the order of release signed Vincent and countersigned Delescluze, and handed it back contemptuously.

"Get this countersigned by the Procureur de la Commune, citizen. Not a Versaillais shall leave La Roquette without an order from citizen Rigault," he said.

"This is not a Versaillaise," said Clifford.

"Say so to the Procureur de la Commune."

"At least," the other remonstrated, "you will let me see the prisoner."

"Without doubt, citizen, when you can bring me an order from citizen Rigault."

Clifford left his presence, but not the prison. He remained all that day in La Roquette, attracting little attention, from his being in the uniform of the National Guard. Before night came again he knew in what part of the prison she whom he

sought was confined. He had arms, having provided himself with sword and revolver in the course of the previous evening ; but in his present condition he felt that the last thing to be attempted was force.

When the supposed Imperialist was dragged into La Roquette, he followed, as closely as his apprehension of being recognized would let him, the footsteps of the party who had him in charge, and saw a cell presently selected for him not far from that in which his young countrywoman was confined. The guard thrust him into it, and retired ; and the ruffianly-looking creature, a foul-smelling compound of brandy and tobacco, who turned the key upon him, went on alone from cell to cell, assuring himself of the safety of their occupants. All that afternoon and evening the drinking of brandy and other liquors had gone on furiously in the prison ; and more than one savage of its garrison was already stimulated to a fitting pitch of ferocity for the morrow's murders. Reeling in his gait, and too confused of sight and hearing to be aware that

his steps were dogged, the warder came presently to the cell in which Isabel was immured, and stopped before it. The next moment he started and grew all at once half-sobered; for the cold barrel of a pistol had touched his ear.

“Don’t speak,” whispered he who thus threatened him; “or——”

For a second the [men stood glaring at each other.

“Open the door of that cell, and go in before me.”

The ruffian obeyed. At sight of him, its occupant started away with a faint cry, that changed the next moment to one of joy.

“Don’t leave me,” she begged, clinging to Clifford; “rather kill me than leave me again.”

He answered her with a look and a clasp of the hand; then, intercepting a movement of the warder to escape. “No,” he said, “you stay here for the present.”

With the help of the prisoner, he tied and gagged him; and then made the



girl disguise herself with his coat and cap.

“And now,” he said, “are you ready?”

“To leave here?” she asked, eagerly.
“You are taking me out of La Roquette, are you not?”

Clifford shook his head. “I wish I could say ‘Yes;’ but, unfortunately, there is no leaving the prison to-night without the direct permission of Rigault.”

“Is he here? Keep me away from him, if he is,” she said, shuddering.

“You will be safest in the hospital ward; that part of the building is deserted, and no one visits it. I will watch for the rest of the night at the door of the ward,” Clifford continued, leading the way. “Rigault! No, he is not here, but he will be in the morning,” he answered, to a renewed inquiry from his companion. “When he has come and gone, we will make our attempt to escape. And now,” he said, when they had reached the empty ward, and he drew aside to let her enter, “I will leave you to try to sleep for a few hours.”

“Thank you,” she said, detaining him ;
“but promise me——”

He interrupted her. “I have promised
you already,” he said, reading in the look
that she cast on him what she sought.

CHAPTER II.

LA ROQUETTE.

“If the devil were to make men, he would coin them in the image of Rigault. There is not another such ruffian in Paris.”

“And yet,” she answered, “it seems to me as if all the ruffianism of France were crowded into Paris just now.”

The sunshine of one of the sweetest mornings ever born to May streamed through the open windows of the hospital ward of La Roquette, and lighted the place up with its golden glory. In quiet fields it shone on cattle grazing and labourers singing at their work; even in great cities it showered down brightly enough to make merry the heart of man as wine can never cheer it; but where the battle-smoke

athered thicker and thicker over Paris
at brightness seemed to grow faint and
urnished, and to change its sweet splendour
r a sickly and lurid glare. It was a
elirium of murder on which the sun looked
own; and the colours under which either
arty fought were now of the deepest red,
r the tricolor was fast being dyed more
arlet than even the *drapeau rouge* itself
blood.

The two speakers stood together near a
indow; and the girl was describing to her
ompanion how the police of Raoul Rigault
ad arrested her as she was leaving Paris;
id how Rigault himself, when she showed
ie ruffian the pass signed by Colonel Ro-
nd, and countersigned by some of the
embers of the Commune, had only laughed
utally, and torn it to pieces. "You must
me to me, *citoyenne*," he had said, "if
u want a pass with which to travel to
ersailles."

"I threatened him with what Louis
ould do; and he laughed again, and left
e; and came back in an hour with an



order in my cousin's handwriting to imprison a number of refractory citizens, who had refused to march against the enemy, in the ditches of Fort Issy. 'As you are trying to pass for a man, *citoyenne*,' he said, showing it to me, 'there can be no harm in treating you as one. You will be barracked in Fort Issy, and by the order of the good citizen who is delegate of war. It is true he does not know that his order will be the means of sending to Issy——' " She stopped, and blushed. "I never quite realized," she said, hurriedly, "the changes that revolutions can work in the natures of those who take part in them, till I saw how inhuman a few weeks' share in this one had made Louis."

"You judge him hardly. You forget that since he came to Paris he has fought, as it were, with a halter about his neck," Clifford answered. "A man whom the Versaillais would shoot the moment he fell into their hands may be excused for not dealing very tenderly with those who sympathize with Versailles."

"In that case, I have nothing to complain of," she replied. "I sympathize most heartily with those who would deliver us from the Commune."

"You don't know them. You!—a nature like yours—sympathize with the men of the 18th of March! You will find that they will be as cruel now as they were cowardly two months ago—now that the leavings of the armies of Metz and Sedan are bringing them back."

As the girl was about to answer, a sudden shudder struck through her; and she turned deathly pale, and had nearly fallen. "It is nothing—nothing," she said, trying to recover herself. "I am a little faint for the moment—that is all."

Her companion ran to support her. "Faint! yes, from want of food," he said, reading the truth of her condition in her eyes. "Stay here; and if there is any in the prison, I will bring it back with me."

A number of National Guards, who were at breakfast in one of the workshops on the lower of the two storeys that compose the

prison of La Roquette, made no opposition to his helping himself to some bread and a bottle of wine.

"Take some brandy, citizen," said one fellow. "It is a better liquor than *vin ordinaire* when the business in hand is killing priests."

His hearer felt that the feelings with which he listened to this speech were expressing themselves in his face; and to hide them, he accepted the flask that was offered him and drank.

"Killing priests!" he repeated, as he set it down. "Are they to be shot this morning, then?"

"*Parbleu!*" said the ruffian. "For what should citizen Ferré have come to the cage, but to pick us out our birds?"

"And citizen Rigault," said another insurgent, "will be here presently to see us singe their feathers."

"Fine work, truly," said a third fellow, surlily, "throwing away cartridges on birds like that!—a few miserable old black crows, that have done nothing worse in all their



lives than croak masses. The — gendarmes are the only birds in La Roquette that I have any heart to fire on.”

“Is there any way of saving them?” was Clifford’s thought, as he hastened to rejoin his companion. “Would to Heaven I could see one!”

The girl eagerly ate and drank of the simple fare that he placed before her; and light began presently to return to her eyes, and her face, though still colourless, lost something of its deadly paleness. Clifford had gone out again to the entrance of the ward, and stood there, listening. She joined him soon, bringing with her the flask that did duty for a glass, filled with wine. “If you will not eat, at least drink,” she said. “Drink to our escape, and that of the hostages who are confined with us in this prison.”

He shuddered, but accepted mechanically the wine that she offered to him. “Thank you,” he said, drinking; and was about to set down the emptied flask, when he started, and let it fall. He ran forward along the



corridor; and Isabel followed him, and caught him by the arm. "What is it?" she said, hurriedly. "What do those cries mean? Are they murdering the prisoners? Tell me!—if we are presently to be murdered, there is no mercy in not telling me."

"Don't ask me," he entreated. "Come away!"

"Those are priests that they are dragging along—yes, I can see quite plainly that they are priests. What does it mean? Are they taking the hostages to some other prison?"

"Yes, yes," he said; "to another prison—a sure and safe one. For God's sake, come away!"

The truth struck sharply on her; and she shrank as if from a blow, and whitened. "They are taking them out to be murdered! This is more of the work that we saw done in Issy!" The colour came suddenly to her cheeks again. "Oh, I will tell them what I think of such deeds, if it costs me my life!" she said, impetuously.

He caught her by the arm, as she was

breaking away from him ; and held her fast. "What would you do ?" he said. "You would lose your own life—you cannot save theirs."

She made no answer, but struggled violently to release herself. "Let me go, let me go!" she said, at last. "It will only be dying a little sooner, if they kill me."

"No, no," he said, "I will save you. I would try to save these lives, too, if it were not useless ; but I will not have you fling yours away."

For all answer, she wrenched herself free with a sudden effort, and fled away. She had made but a few steps, when a discharge of musketry was heard from the courtyard of the prison ; and at that sound she stopped ; and then sank on her knees, shuddering, and pressed her hands to her ears as if to shut something out. Clifford came up to her ; and she looked at him with eyes that horror seemed to dilate, and make fixed and glassy. "Oh, those groans !" she said. "Do you hear them ?"

"Come !" he said, lifting and half-sup-



porting her. "Come away, before the murderers return and find us here."

There had sunk an awful silence within and without the prison after the firing ; but now a muffled knocking was heard as of blows dealt on the doors of cells. "Ah!" the girl said, starting, "all are not dead, then!"

A recollection that was at the same time a hope burned up suddenly in her heart, and flashed out at eye and lip. "The keys!" she said to Clifford, "you have the keys! They have not been able to get at the prisoners who are on the side of the prison where I was confined for want of them."

"Quick, quick!" he answered, catching at her thought. "Follow me; and see that nothing separates us."

In the first cell that he unlocked a priest knelt praying. "Up, father!" the young man cried, flinging wide the door; "up, and save yourself!"

The tenants of the next were two gendarmes. "To the ground floor of the



prison!" called their rescuer to them; "there are arms scattered about the workshops—take them, and defend your lives."

Of the sixty or seventy prisoners confined in La Roquette, twenty-six, among them the aged Archbishop of Paris, had already been dragged out to the courtyard of the prison, and there shot down. The others were presently at liberty; and dispersed themselves over the prison, seeking for escape or arms. A warder falling into their hands in whose possession were the keys of the cells where the ordinary criminal prisoners were confined, these also were liberated; and armed, some with chassepots and others with sabres, the strangely-allied body of priests, felons, and gendarmes sallied out into the prison courtyard.

The murderers were gathered there around the bodies of their victims. A cry rose of treachery, and that the Versaillais were upon them; and dropping their empty weapons, Rigault and his party received a few shots, and fled without any attempt at replying. In their turn, those who had

scattered them dispersed also on reaching the gate of the prison; and La Roquette was left empty of all but the dead.

In this district, the last refuge of the insurrection, there was at every few hundred steps a barricade. One of these, manned, and with the red flag floating over it, was presently encountered in the direction that Clifford took, following others of the fugitives. The first who approached it were shot down; and seeing this, the panic-stricken survivors turned, and fled.

At the first shots from the barricade, Clifford had drawn aside his companion into a doorway. Sprott, who ever since being let out of his cell had dogged their heels as closely as a lackey, crouched, trembling, beside them. Seeing, presently, several National Guards leaping down from the barrier that crossed the roadway, and thrusting cartridges into their chassepots as they started in chase of the fliers, the fright-goaded journalist, with a wild cry of "Run! run!" suddenly sprang out into the street again, and darted off at a rate that seemed

to defy any pursuer less speedy than a bullet.

Some of the insurgents now came up; and the young man stepped out boldly, and pointed to his uniform. "You will not fire on this," he said.

The ruffians surrounded him; and their wolfish eyes glared on him with evident suspicion. "Is there anything of the sheep here but the skin?" said one fellow. "This — has mightily the air of a Versaillais who has killed one of ours and put on his coat."

"You are captain of the —th battalion, do you say? Who will vouch for the truth of that?" asked another.

"Any one who was in Issy."

"The citizen colonel who commands here was in Issy—*Allons!*"

Guilletat, promoted within the last few days at the rate of something like a grade in forty-eight hours, gave his former officer a cordial welcome. "He was with us, as he says. I can vouch for him. It is a brave Englishman," he told his men.

"And the other one, citizen Guilletat?" asked a sergeant.

"She was there also. It is a woman; although she has put on the coat of a National Guard."

"To fight with us?"

"Does she not look as if she could fight?" Guilletat answered, evasively.

"*Vive les citoyennes!*" cried twenty voices. "*Prenez les!*" insisted various fierce figures, crowding round Clifford and his companion, and thrusting on them a chassepot apiece and cartridges. As the former took one, Guilletat suddenly addressed him. "And what has happened at La Roquette?" he said, pointing to three or four dead bodies of priests that lay in the road, not far from the barricade. "These are from La Roquette, are they not?"

"At La Roquette?" Clifford forced himself to speak indifferently. "While the Archbishop and the chief of the hostages were being shot, the others were escaping."

"Escaping!" Guilletat echoed the word

with a brutal laugh, that his federals cordially chorused. "*Parbleu!* let them all take barricades in their way, and heaven will not be cheated of many of them."

He turned to his men and gave some orders; then addressing Clifford, "You will be of more use in the Rue —— than here," he said; "and you will find some of your old battalion at the barricade there. I will put you in the right road to join them—*Allons!*"

The Versaillais had not yet fought their way into this part of Paris. Guilletat walked off leisurely along the street, followed by Isabel and Clifford. After a silent walk of a few hundred yards he suddenly paused, and turning to the young Englishman looked him full and scowlingly in the face. "You were in La Roquette," he said. "You escaped from the prison at the same time with those priests who lie dead in front of our barricade; perhaps it was you who helped the dead dogs and those others who have escaped us for the present to break prison. If it were not that my brother owes



you his life, and that I have seen you fight well for us, I would have laid you dead in the street beside those bodies. I pay the debt I owe you in sparing your life ; keep out of my way for the future, for if we meet again I will not spare you."

He walked off without waiting for a reply ; and Clifford looked long and steadily after him. " And this," he muttered to himself, " is one of the best of them ! "

Isabel's quick ear caught the words. " Forget it all," she said, taking his hand, " or think of it, rather, as only a frightful dream. We will both live, I hope, to think of the scenes we have passed through in these last few weeks as of horrors one sees in a nightmare. And now, how are we to get out of Paris ? "

" Only by the help of a miracle, I fear," he answered. He was thinking that as soon as they came within sight of any troops, the disguises that had so far protected their lives would at once be fatal to them.

In street after street that they passed through, the shops were closed, and all



was silent. Growing at last desperate, the young man selected a house that had every appearance of being deserted, and broke his way into it. His companion and he sought in its silent rooms for the means of changing their dress; and there being to all appearance no person in the house, laid down money in exchange for the articles they took, and withdrew. Hardly were they in the street again, when a man appeared at one of the windows, fired after them, and missed. Clifford turned, drawing his revolver; and the assailant hastily retreated.

“Rue G——,” Isabel said, as, after half an hour’s walk, they turned into a broad and handsome street, and she read the name inscribed at the corner; “this is where Rigault had his house, is it not?”

“How do you know?”

“I knew it from himself,” she answered; and Clifford remembered the hints that Vincent had dropped of insults only to be escaped from into La Roquette, and asked no more.

The savage street-fighting that for two

days now had been rolling hither and thither, but always more and more in the direction of Belleville, was evidently approaching the Rue G——. Some barricade in the neighbourhood was being attacked; and the rattle of small arms, the screaming of the *mitrailleuse*, and even the shouts of the combatants on either side, sounded ominously near and distinct. In the street itself a small crowd, composed both of civilians and military, was gathered before one of the houses, and drew Clifford's attention.

"What!" he said, "has he fled here from La Roquette, and are they searching for him? Those are Versailles uniforms; and that is the house itself."

They advanced after some hesitation, and added themselves to the clamorous group about the doorway.

"Can you tell me, monsieur," Clifford asked of an excited little man in a frock-coat, with an enormous bunch of tricolour riband at the button-hole, "if the wretch Rigault is supposed to be in this house?"



"If the devil has not helped him out of it, monsieur. Our brave troops have only found two of the brigand's mistresses as yet."

"He has hidden himself, the trembler! These rats of the Commune creep into holes the moment that one hunts them," a second hero of the Party of Order, who had trembled through the greater part of the last two days in a corner of his cellar, remarked.

"If this one escapes," said a third, "it must be because he has contrived some particularly-cunning hole to creep into. Jules saw him enter, and ran to bring troops to search the house. I watched it till they came, and no one has come out. He's there, messieurs, as certainly as we are waiting here to see him shot—*Vive Dieu!*" as a shot was heard from within; "the brigand is taken."

The crowd struggled to enter, and were kept back with threats and bayonet-pricks by the soldiers about the door. An instant more, and a wild-eyed, bare-headed figure was dragged out upon the pavement; his



right hand hanging helpless by his side, disabled by the blow that had struck from it the revolver he drew on the troops when unearthed, and his cheek bleeding freely from a sabre-slash. One eager stare round him, in vain hope of a vision of insurgents hurrying to the rescue, and Rigault had resigned himself to the inevitable. His manner had even a reckless lightness in it, as he addressed himself to the troops who were hurrying him forward to a part of the street where he might more conveniently be shot.

“Have you many of these little affairs on hand, comrades? You seem in a hurry to get this of mine over,” he remarked.

“To send thee to the devil—yes,” said one. “He stands at the door of hell, holding it open ready for thee to enter.”

“This poor Satan! He will find, comrade, and St. Peter, also, that I am *bon Catholique*, and have my *laissez-passer* for Paradise. Monseigneur the Archbishop of Paris made it out for me this morning. Ah! the good confession that I made, and the excellent absolution that Monseigneur gave me. It



was a good fellow of an archbishop. And then the fine mass that he sang at La Roquette! *Sangdieu!* citizens, it was a pleasure to hear him chant it."

Suspicious of the hideous meaning of this jesting, the wretch's captors eyed him scowlingly and in silence. Rigault looked round him undismayed; and resumed, with the same tone and manner of ferocious banter.

"‘*Mon fils,*’ Monseigneur demanded of me, ‘are you of the true faith?’ ‘*Mon père,*’ I replied, ‘I am of the faith of the holy fathers, Marat and Robespierre. I have a little neglected, perhaps, to pray to La Reine Marie, because I love better that La Mère Guillotine should be worshipped in France; but——’”

An officer standing before the speaker drew his sword, and struck him with the flat of it a merciless blow upon the mouth.

"*Tais-toi, misérable!*" he screamed, rather than said to him. "Silence! or I will cut out that tongue of yours, and throw it to some dog to eat."





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As he felt the smart of the slash, Rigault turned furiously upon his assailant, and dealt him with his unwounded left hand a blow that laid him, half-stunned, on the pavement.

“——” he yelled to him, with a horrid oath, “thy Archbishop fell like that !”

Almost before the crowd could gather what was passing, with such angry swiftness was the doomed man dealt with, Rigault had been flung against a wall, and some half-dozen of the soldiers round him had fired their pieces into his body. He did not fall dead, however, but rolled in hideous agony upon the pavement, writhing, groaning, and tearing with his nails at the stones, and with his lips a clot of blood and foam. In the two days that they had now had Paris at their mercy, the troops had been developing a brutality and lust of cruelty equalling, if not exceeding, that of the worst acts of the Commune. The butchers of the Rue G—— were no exceptions to the rule of savagery that prevailed among their comrades. They gathered round the



wretch at their feet; and looked down on his agony as a vivisector might on that of the dog he is torturing, and with about as much disposition to end it.

The captain with whom the dying man had exchanged blows was now on his feet again. "Die! then," he said, brutally, and kicking as he spoke at the tortured Rigault; "*morbleu!* will the scoundrel keep us here all the morning waiting for him to die?"

"For pity's sake," a girl's voice beside the speaker entreated of him in tones that were a mixture of supplication and loathing, "end the suffering that you see this poor wretch enduring."

"A soldier has no pity for insurgents, mademoiselle." The ruffian paused, looked at her with a stare of coarse admiration; and then added; "But one says 'No,' to nothing that is asked by such lips. Sergeant!" a non-commissioned officer stepped forward; "as the brigand has still the bad taste not to die and mademoiselle interests herself in his fate; and as, besides, we have



many of these little affairs on hand just now, you may do for him what remains."

As the man drew his revolver and stepped up to Rigault to blow his brains out, Isabel turned shudderingly away. "You were right—oh! you were right," she said to Clifford. "Versailles can be as cruel as the Commune."

CHAPTER III.

THE MERCY OF DIVES.

RE Isabel Cameron and her companion
l escape from Paris, Versailles had
ad them ample evidence that in the
s which spoke her abhorrence of the
ier in which Rigault had been put to
1, the girl had embodied a hideous
1. That the tender mercies of De
fet and Vinoy were as cruel as those
ie worst desperadoes of the Commune,
acres that changed the fair capital to
orgue were hourly proving. It might
been thought that an edict had gone
from Versailles, ordering the in-
iary fires which were fast consuming
architectural glories of Paris to be
ched, not with water, but with insur-
blood.



After twice being arrested in little more than an hour, and having had the pistol that was found on him, and taken from him, held to his head on the first occasion, while he was subjected to an interrogatory by a colonel of the Line, it was the good fortune of Clifford to pilot the girl who accompanied him safely beyond the magic circle of bayonets that was now narrowing from every side upon Belleville. Sinking with hunger and fatigue, Isabel found herself at last in the quarter of Paris from which the insurgents had been driven four and twenty hours previously, and threatened by no very instant danger beyond that arising from the bursting of chance shells. In the two hours that had now passed since the slaughter of Rigault, she had seen Death stalking through the city like the nightmare figure of a dream. He had taken to himself a score of names, as Marquis de Gallifet, Ducrot, Vinoy, Cissey, and others; but wherever he went it was true that, in the emphatic words of the Apocalypse, "He followed him."

Or rather, Paris had become a hell. Starting in the night-time and early morning from building to building, emissaries of Commune had set fire to such palaces the State as were at once splendid in themselves, and calculated from their situation to send roaring through the most magnificent city of Europe a conflagration passing all that history had yet recorded the triumphs of the Fire Demon when fire or accident looses him from his chains, and he leaps up wild and exulting, no longer man's servant, but his terror. At noon on Wednesday the Tuileries was a heap of smouldering ashes, and from every quarter of the capital serpent-tongues of fire rose quivering and hissing; while the volumes of smoke that rolled like clouds across the city made dark and ghastly the face of the May sun. "Must we die?" so like the despair of the insurgents as that smoke and those flames expressed it; "then whatever is costly and splendid in Paris will be our funeral pyre." Wherever the flag still floated on the morning of that

hideous Wednesday, the cry heard was "Burn! burn!" Wherever the tricolor swept triumphantly forward to replace it and the insurgents fell or fled, there rose as if from the throats of demons, the implacable shriek, "Kill! kill!"

In this Limbo, where the ear was stunned and the heart shaken in listening to the continual thunder of the cannon sounding Woe! Woe! on the wretched city, there were heard at times, as in that other hell seen with the eye of the spirit by the blind Puritan, noises of laughter and most frightful mirth. Hemmed within the ring formed by the advancing soldiery, as the savage hems his captive in a ring of fire, creatures of both sexes that reeked with petroleum and were befouled with the grime of battle and in many instances with blood, rushed from the houses that they had fired and the barricades that they had defended to seek for brandy, and drinking greedily of the coveted liquid, sang and shouted, and forgot for a moment the approach of death. In the quarters, too, from which the insurgent:



had been driven, there were heard, as night drew on, strange sounds of music and festivity. The batteries planted by the Commune in Père la Chaise might roar defiance to the tricolor floating on Montmartre; and from Montmartre shell after shell might scream and hurtle among the insurgent gunners crowded in the cemetery; but within houses, above the roofs of which the storm of death was rushing, dance music tinkled from pianos, and couples swept round giddily in the waltz; and Dives, gay at heart at having forsaken the cellar for the drawing-room, celebrated merrily the downfall of Lazarus from the throne the usurping tatterdemalion had snatched, these two months past, among the great ones of the earth.

All that long day of the early summer Cain fought with Cain; and the sun, bright as the eye of God, looked down from an unclouded May sky on the night of smoke that thickened over Paris, and out from which there leaped, fierce and red, the flames in which the most stately buildings

of the city were perishing. There were no longer Versaillists or Communists, troops or insurgents; there were two encountering legions of demons, who raged against each other with insensate fury and an inhumanity as of the infernal pit. His pen scarcely able to keep pace with the demands made on it by cannon, rifle, and bayonet, the Recording Angel wrote down on one page of his ledger how Versailles abused victory, and on another how the Commune resented defeat; and when both tales were told, turned in loathing from the bloodstained records before him, and doubted which showed reddest with the dye of murder. There cried out against the insurgents the blood of the murdered priests and gendarmes of La Roquette; that of the Dominican monks led one by one out of their prison in the Avenue d'Italie, and shot down as they crossed the threshold; that of men foully assassinated in the forts, or who had perished in burning houses that the petroleum of the Commune had set on fire, or who had been murdered at barri-

ades, or in the streets. At once the judge and punisher of these murders, the army in its turn had shaken leaves from the Tree of Life as never the wind of autumn whirled leaves from the trees that along the boulevards waved in shining and tender freshness above the dead. The threat was being fulfilled now, and more than fulfilled, that during the siege had sometimes been made to the insurgents, that if Paris were left to be carried by storm the only mercy granted to the Commune would be death. "It is a war without truce or pity that I wage," De Fallafet had proclaimed, weeks before the march of events enabled him to establish himself as executioner-in-chief to the French capital. "The fact even of remaining in Paris under the Commune is a crime," the chief of police, Valentin, had declared. "All are guilty, and if it depended upon me, all should be chastised." All should be chastised! The dogs of war that from the 22nd to the 27th of May were let slip in Paris were little minded that any who crossed their path should escape without



sharp chastisement. When the last embers of the insurrection had been trampled out on the heights of Belleville, and even Thiers and the Assembly were crying to the army that it was enough, and that Justice might stay her hand, the blood of ninety innocent victims and of ten of the guilty had been shed in revenge for every life taken by the Commune; and in the streets and houses of that Golgotha called Paris, lay heaped the bodies of twenty thousand men, women, and children, slain without distinction of sex or age; and the gutters and the Seine were running blood.

The morning of Thursday dawned dim and sunless. As if shrinking from a further sight of the horrors that he had yesterday looked down upon from his rising to his setting, the King of Day had at last hidden himself in clouds. The Tuileries and Hôtel de Ville, with others of the buildings set fire to on the night of Tuesday and the morning of Wednesday, were now in ashes but along the line of retreat which the insurgents disputed inch by inch as the

fell back on Belleville, fresh buildings were hourly bursting into flame, and the smoke-pall still hung dense over the greater part of Paris. The work of massacre went on unslackeningly. Crowded into positions that were swept from corner to corner by the shells of the enemy, and with provisions and ammunition running low, the insurgents fought now as they had never fought when all Paris was theirs, and between them and the army there were still walls and forts. The troops, exasperated into wild beasts by the wild-beast fury of the defence, shot down prisoners taken with arms in their hands like vermin, and butchered suspected Communists of all ages and both sexes, now by scores, and now by hundreds. In the quarters of the city from which such insurgents as bore chassepots had been driven, there had arisen the terror of a frightful and half-mythical combatant, *la pétroleuse*. Women and children, furnished with petroleum and matches, glided, it was said, from house to house, stealthily watching their opportunity to add to the number of the



conflagrations that were now raging on all sides in the wealthiest and most splendid arrondissements of Paris. The frightened bourgeois, as he glanced every few minutes from his window, in the fear that some such spectres might be flitting beneath it, and then drew hastily back out of reach of a bullet, would catch sight from time to time of a herd of prisoners whom soldiers were driving before them with blows and bayonet-pricks, and would add his loudest and most vindictive halloo to the cries that clamoured wherever such miserable wretches and their escort passed, "*À mort ! à mort !—fusillez-les !—à mort !*"

With the exception of prisoners whom their captors respited from immediate execution to forward them to Versailles, there were few who found it possible to pass out of Paris during these two days of furious street-fighting and indiscriminate massacre. Warned by his experiences of Wednesday, Clifford made no attempt for the present to leave the city. He had been found in possession of arms at the time of his first

arrest by the Versaillais, and his life had hung for a while by the slightest of threads. He had owed it at last in great part to the circumstance that the colonel who interrogated him was an old, white-moustached officer who had fought in the Crimea.

“Go, sir,” said the veteran, suddenly; “you say that you ventured into this part of Paris to rescue the lady who accompanies you from the hands of the insurgents; and strange as your story sounds I believe it. I like the English—I saw them under fire at Inkerman. Go; and remember that in this and the adjoining quarters of the city no man’s life is at present worth a half-hour’s purchase.”

As the afternoon of Thursday was passing into twilight, the young man’s impatience of the imprisonment to which he was condemned, and wild desire to see with his own eyes the last of the Commune, grew almost feverish; and leaving his companion in the hotel where twenty-four hours before they had with no little difficulty obtained admission and refuge, he ventured as far as the

Place Vendôme, where the shattered fragments of the column were still lying, with the statue of the Genius of War in the midst of them, prostrate on its back in the bed of filth prepared to break the crash of the tall pillar. He came back in an hour or two, gloomy, and with strange emotions quivering in eye and lip; and when Isabel and he met again, the girl, seeing what was in his face, forbore to question him; and suffered him, after only a word or two of brief greeting, to walk to one of the windows of the sitting-room where she waited for him, and stand there silent, looking out on the clear May night. He turned away at last with a half-stifled exclamation, and the gesture of a man on whom some hideous memory presses suddenly with new keenness; and meeting her eyes, beckoned her to him.

"You see that building," he said, pointing to one that was burning in the distance. "Go from there five hundred yards or so to the left, and you come to the Place Vendôme. The column lies there, broken into

fragments; and what lie round it, do you think?"

"I don't know—bodies of the insurgents who destroyed it, possibly."

"Yes, bodies, but of women—nearly fifty of them, murdered there this evening by the troops."

"Murdered!"

"Is it anything less than murder to extend martial law to women? Quite enough, I think, that men should taste of its tender mercies. Yes, they murdered them there, under pretence of their having thrown petroleum into houses, or fired on the troops, or something of the kind. I came up, seeing the crowd; and felt inclined to step out and address the executioners with 'Messieurs, if you had shown as much *sang-froid* last year in face of the Prussians, it would have been a less disastrous year for France.'"

Isabel shuddered. "They showed no horror of their task, then?"

"Horror!" He paused for a moment after that exclamation; and then added, "I

thank heaven I fought for the Commune. Horror! If the murders to commit—of women, I mean—had been a thousand, the ruffians would have had cowardice enough for them all. They seemed to have lost all sense of manhood—the only men I saw were the women.”

“They died bravely, do you mean?”

“If ever creatures died bravely. I see them now—their heads flung back, and the eyes—for their eyes had not been bandaged—flashing out defiance of the levelled rifles, and still more of the cowards behind them.” He turned away, and began to pace restlessly about the room. “If France wants her army to be the most terrible in the world, let her recruit it from her women,” he broke out. “I felt, after looking on that sight, as if I could rush off, and join the Commune again.”

“And then the thought of what had passed at Issy and La Roquette came into your mind, I suppose, and restrained you?”

“Of Issy! the thought of Issy, do you say?” He turned towards her, and stood

silent for a moment. "No," he said, as his look met hers, and speaking as if that questioning glance drew forth the words in spite of himself; "it was another thought that restrained me."

He could see, for his eyes were bent full on her, that a faint red came into her cheek.

"These are savage sights," she said, not meeting his look. "How you must long to be away from them!"

"For your sake—yes," he said.

"Not for your own?"

"Not for my own. Do you wonder to hear me say so?"

"Yes," she said, bending her head so that her face was all but hidden from him.

"I can dream dreams while we are still in Paris, but once at Château-Roland I must waken from them."

She made no answer.

"You long to be back there, do you not?"

"Yes," she said, "I am sadly anxious about my aunt. I hope that Louis is with *her*."

"I feel sure that he is. You need have no more doubt of it than that she has entirely forgiven him."

"Yes," said Isabel, "his mother would forgive him sooner than I shall."

"And yet," said Clifford, and paused.

She looked questioning at him.

"I mean that, were I a woman, I think I could easily forgive much more than you have to forgive Louis to a man who gave me no rival but his country."

The girl sat silent for some moments

"Do you mean," she said, at last, "that I have judged harshly of our cousin, and that, as his friend, you tell me so?"

"Yes," said the other, forcing out the word as if it gave him pain to utter it.

She rose, and held out her hand to him

"Good-night," she said. "When I meet Louis at Château-Roland, I will think of what you have said."

"Good-night," he answered, holding fast her hand in his.

They stood thus for a moment, and then she withdrew her hand.

"Good-night, Mr. Clifford," she said, turning from him.

"Ah!" he said, "I have offended you."

"No," she answered, with a faint smile.

"Why should I be offended?"

"I know I have no right to speak to you on a subject on which Louis even has never spoken to me."

"What subject? I fear I scarcely understand you."

"It was in that week—one I shall never forget—that I spent with my aunt and you at Château-Roland, that, unknown to yourself, you showed me something of your heart. Your words and looks must always be mirrors to me, I think."

"And they showed you, do you say, that I thought harshly of Louis?"

"Harshly!" he answered. "No, not then. You thought nobly of him then. You may think nobly of him still; for I swear to you—I, who have been with him since he brought his sword to the aid of the Commune—that he deserves it, and that our cousin's is a noble heart."

The girl smiled, but faintly, and as it seemed sadly. "Ah, yes," she said, "you have clear eyes; as you say, they see deep down into a woman's heart."

"And into the future," he answered. "I look a little way into it, and see you the happy wife of Louis Roland."

"Happy!" she repeated. "Well, yes, such good fortune should make me happy, I suppose. Good-night, Mr. Clifford, good-night."

She was turning away, but in an instant he had sprung before her. "Isabel," he said, catching both her hands in his, "have I been mistaken, then? Is Louis a cousin to you, and no more than a cousin?"

"Leave me, leave me," she said, struggling to release herself.

He darted one quick glance into eyes that were half bent on him, half averted from him; and next instant had caught her in his arms. "Mine, mine," he whispered as she at once shrank from and responded to his kisses, "you are mine, my darling for ever."

CHAPTER IV.

AT LAST.

To be marched along between two lines of cavalry, every trooper of whom has a revolver in his hand with his finger on the trigger, may be as imposing a manner of travelling as it is undeniably an exciting one, but unless the nerves be under singular command it interferes with the attention that one might otherwise be inclined to bestow upon the scenery on the road. It was in this manner that, after stumbling blindly forward for, as it seemed to him, an eternity of hours, Mr. Hodgson Sprott found himself in Versailles, without so much as being confident that he had quitted Paris. The certainty that, whether his eyes looked to the right or the left, they would be en-

countered by the gleaming barrel of a pistol had bent them as steadily upon the ground as those of the man with the muck-rake whom the immortal dreamer saw in vision. Like him of the allegory, too, Mr. Sprott, though he perceived that a crown of immortality was hovering just above his head, was without any desire to put it on. On the contrary, when the prisoners and their escort were halted not far from the Orangery at Versailles, and a stir in front showed that some sort of preparations were in progress, a wild terror that the immortality in question might be about to be forced on him took entire possession of him, and with a scream of "I'm an Englishman!—an Englishman! Some one let our ambassador know that they are murdering an Englishman here. Say that it's a literary man who has been mistaken for a Communist—the well-known journalist, Mr. Hodgson Sprott;" he looked wildly round him in the hope of aid.

A well-dressed and well-looking man of thirty, who was smoking a cigar and stroll-

ing along the line formed by the prisoners and their escort, was attracted by the outcry, and approached its author. He started as he recognized the man before him; and after looking at Sprott very keenly for a moment, turned away without the other having seen him, and went up to the officer in command of the cavalry escort. A few words were exchanged between them; and presently a couple of troopers dismounted, and approaching the little Englishman, detached him from the scowling, black-bearded workman to whom he had been tied, wrist to wrist, and pushed him roughly forward. He supposed that his outcries had reached the ears of some officer, and were to procure him the distinction of being shot the first; and the tug at his heart-strings was such that he fell half-fainting to the ground.

An officer, and the same cigar-smoking civilian who had previously approached him, came up at the moment; and looked first at him as he lay at their feet, and then at each other with an air of some contempt. "Comment!" said the former, with a shrug

of the shoulders that spoke volumes, and pointing to the figure on the ground; "*il est Anglais! Au moins, il n'est pas bouledogue, lui.*"

"More chicken than bull-dog, I think," said his companion. "Up, man," he said, touching the journalist slightly with his foot; "what the deuce do you lie there for, disgracing your country?"

Something in the voice impressed Sprott with a vague sense of its being familiar. He got on his feet, and stared blankly round him. "Is that you, Lord Ralston? I'm not dead, then? Have I been shot yet?" he gasped confusedly.

"Shot? Yes, riddled with bullets," replied his lordship. "What the deuce do you stand there for, shaking your gory locks at us in such an unearthly fashion? Do you think that you're hired to murder the part of Banquo?"

The other, with a stupid air, put his fingers to his head, and looked to see if they were wet with blood.

"'The times have been,' as Macbeth

remarked, 'that, when the brains were out, the man would die,' but that was before your day, I see, Sprott. Lie down, man—lie down again, until I can see to getting you put underground. I'll send somebody here presently to do the job for you. The grave's the place for you, with your skull in that condition."

"My skull, my lord! My skull! It's sound enough, I think," Sprott stammered, grasping it.

"The brains, man, where are the brains? Where were they when you got yourself picked up as a Communist, and dragged to Versailles at the tail of a horse? Where was your pluck just now when you lay howling there? An Englishman! I'm more than half inclined to disown you as a disgrace to your country, and to leave these fellows to work their will with you. Upon my soul, I think that it would be no bad thing for the world to send you out of it. Is your peace with heaven made, Sprott? I hope you'll keep your legs a little better before the firing-party than you



did just now, when you were only anticipating the pleasure of facing one."

"He, he! Your lordship's only joking, I see," said Sprott, relieved.

"Joking, eh?" said Ralston. "Captain Rochemorte!"

"Oh, my lord, for the sake of my wife, my lord! Think, Lord Ralston, I'm your lordship's countryman."

"I wish to the deuce you were anybody else's countryman. Is it handling a quill so long that has made such a chicken—goose, I mean—of you? Rochemorte!"

"My lord! my lord! The *Times* shall know of it, Lord Ralston, if you allow me to be murdered."

"And who the deuce, do you think, would write to the *Times*, my good fellow? Not those who shoot you, I'm very certain; and I don't think you would be in a condition to handle a pen yourself. Hold your tongue, confound you!" as Sprott was about to speak again, "or I'll leave you to manage matters for yourself. You see, captain," his lordship continued, addressing

Rochemorte, "this is a deuce of a mistake on your part, this arrest. Not to mention your prisoner being an Englishman, I'll vouch for it that he hates the Commune as he would the devil, if he had any faith in him."

"Hate it!" cried the other. "A man that has been kept for weeks in the prisons of the Commune, starving on hard bread and horse-flesh, has some reason for hating it, I should say. A man who was to have been murdered at La Roquette with the Archbishop for refusing to fight on a barricade and escaped by a miracle, is not very likely to be in love with Communism. I'll cry as loud as any man in Paris, '*À bas la Commune! — fusillez les insurgés! — à mort!*'"

"You hear, captain," said Ralston.

"*C'est assez, milord,*" replied Rochemorte. "Monsieur," he said politely to his prisoner, "accept a thousand excuses for the mistake we were so nearly committing. If I had had you shot, and learned afterwards your nationality and your innocence, I should never have pardoned myself—never."

"By the Lord, monsieur," said Sprott, "I'd never have pardoned you either."

"*Mais, que diable!* when one arrests in a quarter that is *suspect* a little, frightened-looking foreigner, half-insane, who gives the wildest of accounts of himself, one naturally fancies that this is a Red who is seeking to escape. Even without the assurance of milord I see now, however, monsieur, that you are no Red. It is not such men as you that have kept us for two months knocking at the gates of Paris." Saying this with a perceptible sneer, Rochemorte took a polite leave of Lord Ralston, and turned away.

"Come," said Ralston, impatiently, "I must get you put *en route* for the other side of the Channel, I see. If you stay in France, Sprott, with that white face and those eyes, they'll mistake you for a chicken, and put you in a coop."

"Yes, my lord, yes; I'll go back to London by the first train." Sprott paused a moment, and then added, "But I have no money, my lord, the ruffians who dragged

me off to La Roquette plundered me of every *sou*."

"Well," said Ralston, "you don't expect me to recover what they stole from you, I suppose?"

"No, my lord, but——. It's my zeal, Lord Ralston, that has caused me to be robbed and all but murdered, remember."

"Zeal, Mr. Sprott; zeal for what?"

"For your lordship's interests, Lord Ralston, the interest of your paper, that is to say. Mr. Munden sent me over to Paris as its correspondent, and I've stuck to my post at the risk of my life."

"Well," said Ralston, "say so to Munden, then. Living retired from the world in Mazas or La Roquette, or wherever it was that the Commune quartered you, you would naturally hear very little of what was passing outside your prison. I see you haven't heard yet that Routh and I have sold our interest in the journal to Munden, and that he is now both editor and proprietor."

"Sold it, my lord! In another year,

Lord Ralston this journal will be one of the best literary investments in England. Your lordship must have been——”

“Mad, Sprott, eh?”

“No, my lord,” said the other, recovering himself, “not mad; but I should not wonder if you had made a mistake. What sum did Munden pay you for the property, may I ask?”

“Yes, sir,” said Ralston, haughtily, “you may be guilty of that or any other impertinence, so that you allow me to take no notice of it.”

“As you please, my lord,” said Sprott, in no way disconcerted: “I was wondering whether under the circumstances you would receive the value of the property, that’s all. I assure you, in another year the paper would have been the best-paying property of the kind in London.”

“Well,” said Ralston, “it will pay better than ever now, I should imagine. Munden, of course, will take off the veto I made him put on your—what shall I call it, Mr.

tt? Attic salt, I suppose. Devilish some of the seasoning Aristophanes puts his comedies, it was, to be sure, in in respects, however far short of Aris- anes you may come as a whole."

I know what you mean, my lord," tt answered. "Perhaps I did colour rticles a trifle too warmly at times."

And you'll guard against offending so he future? Is that what you mean, Sprott?"

"I'll try to, my lord," said Sprott. "At —"

At least, you'll expect Munden to pay a pretty high price for anything more in same line. Don't excuse yourself, ; I should know something of you by time, I think. You want money to you back to England, you say. e," taking out his pocket-book, and ing him a note, "will five pounds be gh?"

Many thanks, my lord," Sprott said, eting it. "I regard this as a loan, Lord on."

"A loan! Of course, it's a loan. Why what the deuce did you think it was?"

"I was afraid, my lord, that your lordship might ——"

"Might be offering you charity, eh? No, only to deserving objects. Well, you soon be in the bosom of your family again. You can start to-night, and—— Why Sprott, what's the matter? You look as if you scarcely relished the prospect."

"I was thinking of my wife, my lord. She's still in Paris."

"You model husband! Do you mean say that you have left the poor woman the mercy of the Commune?"

"Left her! Yes, my lord, I left her. What could I do but leave her? I should only have been shot before her eyes if I had resisted."

"Resisted! Resisted what?"

"Resisted the ruffians who were dragging me off to La Roquette. I was imprisoned there all Tuesday night, and was to have been shot in the morning with the Archbishop. Devilish near I was, too, to sharing his crown of martyrdom."

"Well, and what saved you? Did the ruffians you talk of let you go, as not worth powder and shot?"

"I don't understand you, Lord Ralston. No, they had no thought of letting me go. I escaped by a positive miracle."

"What! did the angel that let Peter out of prison come down to deliver the Archbishop, and mistake your cell-door for his?"

"It was anything but an angel that came to the rescue, my lord. Still, it was an old acquaintance of mine, and a friend of your lordship's."

"A *friend*," said Ralston, with some emphasis on the word.

"Young Clifford, my lord."

The young peer's start of astonishment was so violent that his cigar dropped from his lips. "Clifford!" he said. "Is Harry Clifford in Paris?"

"And a Communist, my lord."

"I don't believe it," said Ralston, decisively. "I remember Munden wrote me something last year about his Socialistic

principles, and charges brought against him by a former employer; and I wrote back that the former employer must be a liar. Poor fellow! I have often wondered what had become of him since his strange disappearance."

"I assure you, my lord, Clifford never was anything but a Republican at heart."

"A Republican at heart! Yes, but a man must be a ruffian at heart who, being an Englishman, could mix himself up with the wretches of the Commune. I suspect, Sprott, you are lying damnably to me. You and Clifford were always bitter enemies, I know."

"On my honour, Lord Ralston ——"

"Your honour!" said the other, disdainfully. "You forget, apparently, to whom you are speaking."

"On my oath, then, my lord, it's *the* truth that I'm telling you; and *nothing* more or less than the truth. When I *was* taken to La Roquette——"

Ralston produced another cigar, *and* began lazily to light it. "A miracle," *he*

said addressing himself apparently to the Havannah, "a writer in a Society journal can speak truth. You were saying, Mr. Sprott——?"

"I don't think, my lord," said the other, in a tone of remonstrance, "that I have given your lordship any reason to insult me."

"Insult you, my good fellow! The devil himself, they say, speaks the truth at times—when it pays him, I suppose—why should it be an insult, then, to take it for granted that you may sometimes do the same? I'm sure, if I'm mistaken, I'm very ready to apologise."

Sprott sullenly held his peace; and the two walked on for a few hundred yards in silence.

"Well," Lord Ralston said, breaking it, "so Clifford saved your life, you say?"

"Yes, my lord, that is——"

"And the return you make him is that you accuse him of being a Communist! Perhaps you expect me to believe that he took an active part in murdering the Archbishop?"

"If you would only listen to me, Lord Ralston——"

"I should hear something sensational, no doubt. Well, fire away, then. 'Thrilling adventures of an English journalist in Paris,'" said Ralston, laughing.

He listened until his hotel in the town of Versailles was reached; and then, suddenly cutting the other short, "Either you are deceiving me or yourself, Sprott," he said. "I can't believe this that you tell me about Clifford. I don't see what possible motive he could have for getting mixed up with the insurrection."

"Your lordship has heard of Colonel Roland, the officer who deserted from the regular army and joined the insurgents?"

"And who was the second of the three delegates of war. Yes; what of him? There's a report that he has been shot. It's to be hoped it's true."

"Why, surely your lordship must remember that he is Clifford's cousin?"

"The deuce he is! Who says so?"

"I thought you would remember, Lord

lston, that he came over to England a
r ago, and paid a visit to Clifford
en——”

‘The deuce he did! By Jove! I re-
mber something of it now. An officer
engineers, was he not? I remember
fford telling me he had distinguished
aself in the scientific part of his profes-
sion at the Polytechnique. By heaven!
his name was Roland. Sprott, you have
made out your case, I’m afraid. I’m glad
your grandfather’s dead,” Lord Ralston con-
cluded, after a moment’s pause. “It was
better that he should die of the shame there
than already in the family, than have lived
when this was added to it.”

‘Perhaps he would not have taken this
much to heart.”

‘His grandfather! A clergyman of the
English Church! If he had lived to see
his grandson a Communist, and could have
reprimanded him by speaking a word from meeting
his fate that he has earned for himself, he
would have said, ‘Shoot him. He deserves
it’ or I know nothing of the man.”

The two men stood silent for a moment.

"Come to me to-morrow at ten," Ralston presently added, abruptly. "I'll have a pass for you, I hope, by that time; and we'll try to get into Paris to look for your wife. It would be a deuced deal more to your credit, let me tell you, if you were to show yourself as anxious about her safety as you were just now about your own."

It was not, however, until noon on Saturday that the young peer and his companion were duly furnished with military passes, and able to get within the *cordon* that German troops on the north and French on the south had now drawn completely round Paris. They entered the city by the ruined gate of St. Cloud through which the first column of the Versailles troops had passed; and stopped just within the *enceinte* to look round them upon windowless and tottering fragments of walls, that were all that the bombardment had left of what had been houses; and upon roadways that had the appearance of being macadamized with fragments of shells. After a while they

passed on in the direction of the Arc de Triomphe, and so into the Champs Elysées.

Early on Saturday morning, too, Clifford and Isabel ventured to leave the hotel that had sheltered them (or, rather, were forced from it by the consideration that in a few days more they would be without the means of reaching the Cevennes); and had sought to make their way out of Paris. Repulsed from every gate by which they tried to obtain egress; and after having been more than once threatened with arrest, they re-passed the Arc de Triomphe about mid-day, after three hours of danger and disappointment; and sought shelter from the heavily falling rain under the trees of the Champs Elysées.

“We are prisoners, then,” said Isabel.

“Not for long, I hope.”

“I hope not. I could not bear much more of Paris. I feel as if the weeks I have spent here had made me old. For the last few days, in particular, I seem to have been living in a nightmare.”

“A nightmare! Yes, and one that would

have deprived of reason ninety-nine in a hundred of your sex," replied Clifford.

"Am I strong-minded, then?"

"Strong-hearted, at least, you are. I don't think you know what fear is."

"I am not nervous, that is all; and I have excellent health, and the very worst of tempers. You look incredulous, but it is true. Strong nerves, strong health, and a bad temper, are all the capital I shall ever have on which to set up as a heroine. I see I am already bankrupt in your estimation."

"I don't believe your account of yourself, that is all."

"Well, the next time I am frightened, I will show my fear, instead of making any attempt to hide it; and then, perhaps, you will believe me. Do you think we ought to try again this evening to get away from Paris?"

"I think not; I think we had better wait patiently till Monday."

"Patiently! Patience is a virtue that is never at hand when one wants it, as far as

my experience of it goes. I feel in a very impatient humour just now, I assure you; and especially when I think of my aunt. Oh," the girl said, with a shiver, "how wet I am! There is no brook-scene in Hamlet, is there? if there were, I am perfectly in costume for Ophelia—all but the garlands, that is. I wish I had that carpet of the Arabian Nights that carried one in an instant wherever one wished to go."

"I wish I were in costume for Hamlet; and then I should at least have a cloak to offer you. The rain is stopping; shall we hurry on to the Hotel M——? I have been blaming myself all the morning," her lover continued, "for not having left you there, and come out alone to see whether it was possible yet to leave Paris."

"Well, it is very foolish of you to blame yourself, for, believe me, you would have had my company whether you had wished for it, or not. You shake your head, but I assure you that I have had my own way ever since I was old enough to know what self-will meant, and intend having it to the



end of the chapter. But what can be the reason that those two men—no, you are looking in the wrong direction for them—have seemed to be watching us for the last five minutes?”

Clifford looked at them. “It is dangerous,” he said, “to be watched in Paris just now. Let us walk on. They are ill-looking rascals, as far as one can judge of them at this distance.”

“They are English by their faces,” said Isabel, who had sharper eyes than her companion.

“English!” said the other, in a changed voice; “English! Yes, I see they are.”

He turned, and walked rapidly towards the strangers.

“Your servant, my lord,” he said, as Ralston and he stood face to face. “There is a very heavy debt to settle between your lordship and myself.”

“I hear you have a debt also to settle with society,” Ralston answered. He pointed to some troops in the distance. “You know, I suppose, that if you were

once in the hands of those gentry your shrift would be a short one ? ”

“ I can’t answer you with a bullet,” said the other. “ I would, if the troops you speak of had left me the means.”

“ You seem in a hurry to exterminate the aristocracy, my good fellow. Do you really suppose it is my intention to give you up, *that* you are in such anxiety to try a shot at me ? ”

“ I suppose that my life is, to a certain extent, in your hands ; and that you know it, and that the brother need scarcely look for better treatment from you than the sister.”

“ The sister ! the sister ! What the deuce does he mean ? ” Ralston asked, speaking half to himself, and half, as it seemed, to Sprott. “ If you think, Clifford,” he continued, “ that I was at all to blame in that unhappy matter of your sister, I can only say that I am very sincerely sorry. You couldn’t expect, surely, that I should ask her to marry me, however infatuated I might be about her at the time. Looking



at the poor girl's conduct since, it's very evident that the attachment was all on my side, and that she could not have taken much to heart my leaving her. I thought, a year ago, she might have some little liking for me, I confess ; and the way she took of proving to me that I was wrong cut me deeper than I like to think of. I had a bad enough opinion of women even while this one was innocent, but I have a worse one now."

As he said this, Clifford fairly broke out laughing. "And you are sorry for the poor girl," he said. "And you think she could not have cared very much for your leaving her. And my sister's conduct has given you a worse opinion of the sex in general, has it? I wonder whether that tongue of yours will be as impudent when I have had my hands at your throat for a minute or so."

What he would have done he could scarcely have told himself, but the girl beside him caught at his arm and clung to him.

"Harry, Harry," she said, "you don't

understand him. Don't you see that he has no idea that you suspect him of having betrayed and abandoned your sister ? ”

“ His sister ! ” said Ralston, in the accent of a man who asks himself whether he be awake. “ Is it possible, Clifford, that you don't know that your sister went off with Dallas ? Did you suppose that it was I that had been the happy scoundrel ? ”

“ Dallas,” said the brother, mechanically ; “ Dallas ! ” The other's speech seemed to light upon him as if it had been a blow ; he staggered, and grasped at Isabel's arm to save himself from falling. “ Dallas, Dallas,” he repeated. “ Do you say, my lord, it was Dallas ? ”

“ On my honour it was he,” said Ralston. “ He took her to Norway with him in his yacht ; and they spent some weeks there. I had a letter from him not long after she went away with him—very pleasant reading it was, and remarkably pleasant Dallas knew I should find it—giving me the news.”

“ I must see that letter, my lord.”

“ I have it at my hotel, I believe. It is

at your service, if you like to return with me to Versailles."

Clifford looked sharply at him; his suspicions reviving at the proposal.

"As you said just now," he answered, "I have fought for the Commune. Paris is a prison to me, at present. This lady and I——"

"Not a sister in the cause, I hope," said Ralston, glancing at her.

"No, my lord," said Isabel, calmly. "As little a Communist as is Mr. Clifford himself."

"He says that he is one."

"No, only that he has fought for the Commune."

"How!" said Ralston, catching at her words, "do you mean that it was against his will that he fought for it?"

"Of my own free will, certainly," Clifford said, answering for himself; "and yet it is true, as she says, that I never was a Communist."

Ralston looked from one to the other. "If there is a mystery in all this," he said,

“ I should be very glad to have it explained to me.”

Before Clifford could answer, Isabel had spoken for him.

“ There is no mystery,” she replied. “ A cousin of both of us, Colonel Roland, was sanguine enough to imagine that the insurrection would continue the war with Germany; and in that belief he went over to the insurgents, and persuaded Mr. Clifford to share his hopes, and to join the rebellion with him. But it was entirely out of his friendship for Roland that he did so; and he broke his sword and abandoned the insurgent cause on the day when all his efforts could not prevent a number of helpless prisoners from being murdered in Fort Issy. I was one of them—the only one that was spared—and it was he that saved me.”

“ What! a woman. Did the Commune even murder women, then?”

“ Not as Versailles is murdering them, certainly,” said Clifford. “ Not by the hundred at the time, that is to say.”

"I should be sorry, Mr. Clifford, to defend all that the French army is doing, but you would find it a hard task to persuade me that it can ever sink to the level of the wretches of the Commune. To return to your own affairs. I hear that when the Archbishop was murdered in La Roquette you were a sort of deputy-governor there."

Clifford smiled contemptuously as he glanced at Sprott. "I can well imagine," he said, "from whom you had your information."

"You mean it's a lie, eh?" said Ralston. "It was Sprott here who invested you with the dignity I am telling you of. But what were you doing in La Roquette? Or were you there at all?"

"Yes, he was there; but for a day and night only," said Isabel. "He had heard that I was imprisoned there, and put his life in danger to save mine. He could not save the Archbishop—though with a hundred men at his back, and of his own spirit, he would have done it; but great courage has sometimes great good fortune, and although

he was alone, he succeeded in preserving my life and the lives of a number of others—of whom,” pointing to Sprott, “this gentleman, if I am not mistaken, was one.”

“Gentleman! Gentlemen are a little more careful as to what they say of those to whom they owe their lives than he appears to be. I suppose, Sprott, if you had been the traveller in the parable whom the Good Samaritan picked up between Jericho and Jerusalem, you would have accused him as soon as he had brought you to the inn of being one of the rascals who had plundered you? But still, Clifford, whatever this lady and others may owe to you; and even if you had grown disgusted with the red flag before these last massacres, you admit that there was a time when you fought under it?”

“As I would fight again to-morrow, if it were possible for the circumstances to occur again that led me to join the Commune,” Clifford answered.

“I regret very much to hear it. I think I can get you safely out of Paris, but once

away from the city you must look to your own safety."

"I will do so, my lord. Our roads must lie together, however, until you can prove to me that I have done you wrong in taking you to be the author of my sister's ruin."

"That is to say that you doubt my word."

"That is to say I neither doubt nor credit it, but I ask for proofs. You disappeared at the same time with my sister; and until you prove the contrary to me, I shall continue to think it possible that there was a connection between the events."

"Disappeared! Who—I? I confess, Clifford, I should like to know what you are speaking of. I'll borrow your military pass, Spratt, for an hour or two, if you'll allow me. With this, Clifford, you may return with me to Versailles, and we will see if these mysteries can be cleared up. This lady who is your companion, Miss——?"

"Miss Cameron."

"Well, Miss Cameron, as being both a woman and a British subject, may easily

be got out of Paris under cover of our passes, I think. As for Sprott here, let him remain in the city and look for his wife."

"What! without a pass, my lord? If I were to blow out my brains at once, it would be simpler," Sprott objected. "Between being nearly murdered by the Commune and just missing being shot as a Communist by the Versailles, I have had warning enough, I think, against venturing about Paris without some sort of *laissez-passer*. If you insist on borrowing my pass, Lord Ralston, the least that you and Clifford can do is to find me some quarters where I may establish myself till you come back."

"Can you find him a kennel, the cur?" said Ralston aside to Clifford.

"Why, since he prefers taking care of himself to trying to find his wife," said Clifford, "I would recommend him to quarter himself in the Hotel M——, where I have been staying myself. We can walk there in half an hour."

"*Allons*, then," said Ralston. "To-

tomorrow, Sprott, unless something unexpected occurs to prevent me, I'll look you up again, and join with you in your search for your wife. 'Pon my soul, there's something superb in your stoicism about her—old Zeno would have admired it, and so would Socrates. It's a trying thing to be left twenty-four hours longer without knowing whether she's dead or alive, but you seem to bear the suspense as well as Socrates himself could have done. It's true you have the comfort of thinking that, considering where and how you left your spouse, her tongue's most probably as quiet by this time as Xantippe's."

"I don't understand you, my lord. If you mean anything satirical," Sprott answered, "I can't say that I think it quite the thing to joke at the expense of a husband's feelings."

"And of such a husband, too," said Ralston, laughing. "A model of a Benedict! His wife will think him so, I'm sure, when she hears how he grieved for her loss."

"I hope, my lord, there's nothing unmanly in feeling a loss of this kind without showing it."

"Unmanly! Don't I tell you that I doubt if England could show another husband like you. I hope to heaven there are not many in the world," Ralston muttered to himself, as he walked on. "I don't think much of women; their virtues are sham, as a rule, and their vices real; but, hang it! the worst of the sex would be to be pitied if she were tied for life to a cur like this."

They were now in sight of the wreck that had been the Tuileries.

"*Vive la Commune!*" he added, looking at it with some attention. "I don't think, Clifford, that, if the very devil himself had been let loose in Paris, he could have done more mischief than these fellows that you say you have been fighting amongst."

But little conversation passed between Lord Ralston and his two companions during their journey from Paris to Versailles. His hotel there was reached as

afternoon was drawing into evening; and he hastened to begin a search among his papers. "Yes," he said, after a minute or two so occupied, "here is the letter that I had from Dallas. I can't say, Clifford, that I envy you your feelings as you read it."

It was dated some nine months back, and, as the recipient had said, from Norway.

"You see, my dear Ralston," the writer began, "that, good as your fortune may have been among women, and although you have your character as a mixture of Nimrod and the Wandering Jew to give you *prestige*, and have the advantage of me in one or two other ways; yet, after all, the little daisy of Wastdale Head has preferred my button-hole to yours. By the way, I intend re-christening her Pearl; there's more of the pearl than the daisy about my little Margaret.

"She has some vague hope, perhaps, that I may be infatuated enough to marry

her; but my conscience—such as it is—does not remind me that I ever distinctly promised marriage to her. There was no great need, in fact, to make promises to her never intended to be kept; for even before she knew me she was tired, I fancy, of virtuous poverty, and sighing for a change. I dare say she likes me desperately; but if I had been as poor as I was before my uncle had the great kindness to die, I might have hung about her long enough before she would have agreed to leave her home for my protection. As it is, the truth is that I scarcely had as much trouble as I could have wished in the matter.

“I can imagine your look, my dear Ralston, when you read this, and learn—if you have not had the news already from her brother or grandfather—that the little flirt who made such an impression on you never cared two straws for your lordship, and has proved her indifference by going off with the person whom she really favoured. Pearlie was describing to me

only the other day that delicious scene under the old apple-tree—the one, I mean, in which you preached her a sermon half an hour long on the unhappy results of *mésalliances*, with Tennyson's Lady of Burleigh for your text. My dear fellow, if you could but have got the girl to care for you, she'd have yielded *le don d'amoureux merci*, as the Middle Ages would have called it, without absolutely insisting that in return you should lay a viscountess' coronet at her feet. I'm confoundedly glad, however, that your pride prevented you from making what are called honourable proposals to her; for with all Miss Pearl's *tendresse* for me, I've no doubt the worldly little jilt would have thought it very much better to be your wife than than what she is, in short. She's by no means such a simple child of Nature as she looks. I can assure you, Ralston, I felt as jealous as Othello when you were hanging about her at Wastdale, although I must say it was deucedly convenient to be able to carry on my advances to her under cover

f the flirtation between her and you; and
o set that lout of a brother who has
migrated to look after your lordship as a
olf of a Don Juan, who had prowled into
ie Wastdale sheep-fold with the intention
f robbing him of his sister. I could roar
ith laughter when I think how suspicious
made him of your intentions, and how he
sed to bore my poor little Pearlie to death
ith scoldings and cautions about her noble
dmirer. A capital joke it was, but I dare
ay your lordship doesn't appreciate it.

“ We intend staying in this quarter of
he world for a fortnight or three weeks
onger, and then—— Well, I doubt if it
ould be quite diplomatic on my part to
ell you where I intend taking her to then.
I don't suppose you would look us up your-
self; but you might be tempted to com-
municate the address to her grandfather, or
he brother who remains; and the hysterical
little chit has almost cried her eyes out for
thinking of them as it is. Au revoir, mon
cher. If this reaches you in Venice, I
hope you will find some brunette Margharita



to console you for the blonde Margaret that jilted you at home.

“Ever yours,

“T. DALLAS.”

“P.S.—You remember the Bijou Theatre and La Cigale—at least, your cheque-book should, for the theatre and the lady between them scattered its leaves abroad pretty considerably. Alsager has taken it, I hear; and is going in heavily for burlesque and opera bouffe. I always thought that Sir Frederick was of opinion, with Dickens’ Viscount, that ‘legs is human natur.’ If he is still lessee of the Bijou about this time next year, I’ll try to get Pearlie persuaded to come out there. How well she would look as a page or a prince, or something of that kind; and I’ll bet, too, that she would be no mere stick on the stage, but a capital actress. If she has not the histrionic faculty to perfection, how the deuce did she manage to throw dust in those sharp eyes of yours so cleverly. I don’t make much account of the way in which she cheated her brother and he

grandfather—that was easily enough done ;
out you——! Oh, Ralston, my poor fellow,
how deucedly you were taken in ! ”

“ Well ? ” said Ralston, as Clifford handed
him back the letter.

“ You are right, my lord,” he answered,
speaking rather in reply to the other’s look
than to his brief interrogatory, “ these are
pleasant words for me to read. There could
not be a pleasanter letter, unless it were
one to tell me that the girl whom this
speaks of was dead.”

“ Harry, Harry,” a voice beside him said
reproachfully ; and a hand for a moment
touched his lips.

Some memory of his sister’s face as he
had seen it in days when they were children
in the old farmhouse, rose up before Clifford
as Isabel’s remonstrance reached him, and
softened the look in his. “ Why,” he said,
speaking as it seemed to himself, “ she was
almost a child. Oh, the villain that made
her what she is ! Daisy—my little sister ! ”

“ You will go to her, Harry,” pleaded



Isabel. "You will tell her that if she will leave the life she is leading, you will remember nothing but that she is your sister. Lord Ralston will tell you where she is."

"I wish I could," said Ralston. "I have heard nothing of the poor girl since last winter, when Dallas and she were in Italy."

"In Italy? I sought her in Italy a year ago," said Clifford, abruptly. "How was it, my lord, that, although when you left the Engadine you gave instructions that your letters were to be forwarded to Venice, I could hear nothing of you there?"

"In Venice. Did you follow me to Venice?"

"Yes."

"And, I suppose, not finding me——"

"I fancied that you had never had any intention of going there; and that when you left the Engadine it was to join my sister."

"I see. Well, it was simply an unlucky impulse of mine that prevented me from delivering myself in due course on the

Rialto. Direct routes never were much to my taste; and so, when I left the Engadine, I took Zermatt in my way, out of an inclination I had to try my fate against hanging by a scramble up the Matterhorn. The mountain let me off more easily than some; still, I lay at Zermatt for three weeks after the ascent with a broken head and a badly-sprained ankle. I had no 'fair spirit for my minister,' however. You see, Clifford, if I disappeared at the same time as your sister, it was not because I had robbed you of her."

"I see I have wronged you, my lord, and I am sorry for it. But you brought among us the villain who has stolen her from us, remember."

"Well," said Ralston, curtly, "if that writes me down an ass it does not prove me to be a rascal."

"And you can really give me no clue as to where my sister and her companion may be at present?"

"On my honour, no. All I can say is that your sister has certainly not made

her *début* as yet, either at the Bijou or any other theatre. If you find her, Clifford, as I hope you will, be gentle with her. Remember that all women are weak, and whatever that scoundrel may say in his letter, it's my belief that this one was sorely tempted. Poor girl!—poor little frail, foolish Daisy! She could never have been anything to me; for my rank prevented me from marrying her, and I could not have looked twice into those innocent eyes of hers and thought of seeking her ruin; but it cuts me deeper than you might think that she should be the thing she is.”

“I think nothing of you but what is to your honour, Lord Ralston. It was my misfortune and not my fault that I should for nearly a year have been wronging you in my thoughts. And now, good-bye, my lord. We are not likely ever to meet again; let me thank you, before we part, for old kindnesses to my family and myself. I beg your pardon, Lord Ralston, with all my heart, for having believed that you could be anything but an honourable English gentleman.”

He held out his hand as he spoke ; but Ralston, who had many times shaken hands with him in old days, retreated a step, and put his own behind his back. "I don't want to make myself your judge," he said, "but you tell me you have fought for the Commune. I shake hands with no man who would do that, however clean yours may be of the blood that was spilt at La Roquette."

They stood for a moment looking at each other as men look who understand that they are to meet no more on this side of the grave, and then Clifford bowed, and turned away.



CHAPTER V.

THE WEEK OF THE TERROR.

THE waning moon shone faint and solemn on the rocks of the Cevennes, and looked with a wan, strange face into decaying châteaux that had lain silent since the warpsalms of the Camisards ceased to be heard in Languedoc. Of the little band of martyr-warriors who had dared to think God greater than the king, and whom Louis XIV. had given over to the sword as rebels, and to the fire as heretics, the bravest and best had been Laporte Roland, of whom, as Knox, it might have been said that he had never feared the face of man, and, as Bayard, that he was "sans peur et sans reproche." Into that very room of Châteaun Roland, where the entrapped warrior had

used a moment in prayer before opposing naked breast and single sword to the numberless weapons of the enemy into whose hands a traitor had delivered him, May moon now looked softly; and saw last descendant of the Camisard chief—praying where his ancestor had knelt before him, and alone with memory, and with the dead. Had some Lares of the grey plateau read that which was in the young dier's heart, and been gifted with the power of speech, the spirit would have explained, in almost the words of the poet from the raven Conscience haunted—

“On the morrow *he* will leave me
As his race have flown before.”

Yesterday Louis Roland had buried his father; and to-morrow he was to proceed to Paris, to seek there, among the wrecks of the Commune, for the girl who had parted from him three weeks before to go to the bedside of her aunt, and whom plateau Roland had never yet seen.

On spending part of this, the eve of his departure, in writing his will, Roland felt

that he was confessing to himself that what he was about to do bore no inconsiderable resemblance to deliberately rushing on his death. Isabel, and, failing her, Henry Clifford were the heirs that he selected to succeed him in the ownership of the crumbling château, and acre or two of vineyard, that were all he had to leave. It was more than possible, he told himself, that both these legatees might prove to be dead before him; and he cast about for some other near relative, attached to him by ties, not only of blood, but of affection, to whom, in the event of their death, he might bequeath the historical inheritance of the Rolands. There was none; and when the two old servants, François and Marie, had been made witnesses to the will, he betook himself to wandering from room to room of the old château, with almost the feeling that it was a world, and he the last of the beings who had dwelt in it.

As the night came on, and there deepened in Château Roland a darkness broken only by the ghostly moonlight, shadows of his

d forefathers seemed to the watcher to her round him, and to flit from room room with him as he passed forward on lonely vigil. A man of firm nerves, and an almost disdainful superiority to morbid hypochondriacal broodings, Roland had inherited from his mother the uncanny something latent in Scottish blood that makes the clearest-headed nation on the face of the earth not the least liable to weird fancies concerning the unseen world. He could almost have said that night that there were voices near him which wailed and moaned; and when he entered the room consecrated to the memory of his fore-ancestor, and knelt to pray, he looked strangely round him, feeling for the moment as if there must needs shine upon him from the darkness the cold eyes of the dead.

He sat for great part of the night in that familiar room, thinking of the men and women of his house who had died in the guillotine since the far-away time when the body of the noble Huguenot rebel was carried from it to be burned in the market-

place of Nîmes ; four of his living followers perishing round it at stakes facing the pyre kindled for the dead. There had not again arisen a Roland who had made any figure in history. Some of the family had cast in their lot with the persecuted remnant of the Church of the Cevennes ; and had fought bravely the battle of their religion ; dying at last at the stake, or upon the wheel ; or rotting piecemeal in horrible dungeons ; or giving up the ghost under the lash of the torturer, on board of the slave-galleys to which two of the most loathsome figures of French history, Louis XIV. and XV., Moloch and Belial, condemned their subjects who dared to worship God in spirit and truth, and according to another fashion than the debasing and hypocritical one that was practised among the panders and harlots of the court. Others had found the weight of civil and religious tyranny more than they could bear ; and had left France for countries where men might labour without being stripped of half their earnings by the tax-gatherer, and

orship in the faith of their fathers without anger of lingering out their lives in prison, of losing them more quickly at the stake. At the time when the tyranny of centuries was visited on the head of the weak Sixteenth Louis, a cadet of the family was soldiering under the Dutch in the Indian seas; and, being stirred to strange hopes by the downfall of the French monarchy, drew up the commission that he had won at the point of the sword, and returned to France. He lived to despair of liberty, seeing what the Revolution had brought forth, and died a colonel of the First Empire, leaving a son who, forty years afterwards, won his way to the same grade under Napoleon III. This younger of the two colonels Roland had met, while he was still but a captain, and Louis Philippe was on the French throne, a gentle-eyed, delicate man, who had come from the north of Scotland to winter for her health at Nîmes; and, falling in love with her, had won her return that love, and had brought the tender, affectionate creature home to the

old château in the Cevennes. That was eight and twenty years ago; and she had yesterday been carried to her grave, having died lonely and a widow in the dim old château where, more than a quarter of a century before, she had been as lonely a bride.

Roland thought of his mother as he remembered her, careworn, and pale, and gentle; with the brown of her hair fading slowly into grey; and a frailness of constitution that passed with the passing of years into confirmed ill-health; and had chased all lightness from her step, and almost all brightness from her eyes. He carried always about him a miniature of her, painted within a month or two of her marriage, and showing a sunny-haired, tender-eyed girl, in whose fair face there already appeared to struggle with a natural gaiety the sadness born of ill-health and a lonely and care-vexed life that was destined so completely to overshadow the autumn of her years. That sweet, girlish countenance seemed to rise before him in the moonlight,

the gentle eyes to look reproachfully his. Was it Time that had changed it he worn face he had last kissed as it lay he coffin? or had beauty wasted from rematurely because the fond and gentle had known much loneliness and sorrow, had been parted often and long from husband and her son? Ah! how dearly son had loved her;—how cruelly, alas! had left her. She was at peace now, had died blessing and forgiving him; the weary eyes that had watched long sadly for his coming, or filled with tears aching from him, would shine upon him no more. He fell on his knees, and asked heaven's pardon, as he had asked hers in kneeling at that bedside by which Angel of Death stood waiting to bear tired spirit to its rest. Out of the dark there seemed to break a shining upon; and with something of the light of a dawn he felt the soul that had gone from earth to be set among the hosts of heaven and down on him and bless.

Half-mile from Château Roland a track

winding through a pass of the mountains turns downward, and to the left ; and both the grey homestead and the hill that it crowns are suddenly shut from sight. As he came to this place in the early morning that followed a night of which but an hour or two had been spent in sleep, Louis Roland halted to take a long look back at the house that he had loved and was leaving. Above a hill green with vines rose the ancient roof of the château ; and through trees of which a few were older than the walls themselves, its walls peered dim and venerable. In the heaven there was the sun, on earth stillness ; a silence disturbed neither by the voice of man, nor the cry of an animal, nor even the song of birds. The winds were gathered up, and asleep ; sleep drooped in the leaves, hung in the heavy air, and lay like a garment upon the hills. It might have been thought that life had died out of the valley with the Camisards ; and that the only dwelling it contained had been given over since the slaughter of their leader in it to the hero's

ost. A last look at the château, a last sight of the dead; and then the house which his forefather had been slain, the use of his own birth, and beneath the roof of which his mother had died,—that loved dwelling to which, as to a shrine, he had hoped to bring the laurels that he might pluck in war,—had passed from his sight, and was a dream.

It was the evening of the 24th of May when he entered Paris. He had broken his journey earlier in the day to seek means of disguising himself; and now wore the uniform of the Eastern Railway service, and professed himself, in reply to military interrogatories, to be Tirobois, an engineer from Dijon, summoned to Paris on account of the pressure of traffic that was expected to follow the fall of the Commune. He found the city lighted still with the blaze of the fires that the insurrection had kindled—the consuming of itself and Paris, and taken from the suburbs to the centre by an earthquake tumult of battle. The theatres had been murdered that morning;



although the rumour of their death was as yet scarcely credited, even by the army; the Tuileries and the Hôtel de Ville were both heaps of ashes; and new fires were hourly kindling in almost every quarter of Paris. And such mercy as the insurgents were showing to the city, the conquerors were dealing forth to them.

Avoiding the immediate scenes of conflict by a skilfully-contrived succession of *détours*, Roland attempted to make his way to the house in which Isabel had been lodged by him during the few days of her stay in Paris. At the corner of the Rue Royale, however, in which street several houses were blazing, he found himself pressed into a *chaîne*; and was compelled to labour far on into the night, as one of a string of auxiliaries whom the troops were seizing on all sides in aid of the more regular firemen, and were forcing to toil their hardest in extinguishing the flames. It was near midnight before he could make his escape; and when he at last turned the corner of the little street that he had been

seeking to reach, another day had been born ; and the tremendous record of Wednesday, the 24th of May, had been transferred to the books of the Recording Angel, and was a horror of the past.

It was scarcely to be called a street in which he found himself. A mound of ruin, from fifteen to twenty feet high, rose across the roadway and showed where a barricade had been pounded into a shapeless heap by artillery. On this again, roofs, walls, and burning *débris* from the houses on either side had fallen. A few steps beyond this sinister obstacle some embers of buildings were yet smouldering, and one of these, where tongues of flame flickered up from moment to moment and threw a dull light on a strip or two of shaking wall, he recognized as the wreck of the house that he was seeking. Dead bodies lay thick among the other ruins that choked the roadway ; and at the farther end of the small street, where were still standing a few scorched and blackened tenements that the fire had failed to seize upon, were to be seen the uniforms



of troops. A sharp challenge from one of the nearest, accompanied rather than followed by the *ping* of a bullet past him, warned Roland to retreat.

He spent the few hours that were yet to pass of the May night with something of the feeling of the man whom a nightmare oppresses. The thunder of the duel that the batteries of Montmartre were waging with those of Père la Chaise, the rushing of shells overhead, their bursting beside, behind, and in front of him, the flame and smoke that were belched upwards in such masses as if Paris had been built over the mouth of the infernal pit, the incessant volleying of musketry, the yells and cheers of the combatants who were defending or attacking barricades, the shrieks of women, and the miserable cries of wounded insurgents who lay dying untended where they had fallen, such unnatural sounds and sights, together with the tremendous devastation that even night could but thinly veil, the unburied dead scattered by the thousand through the streets, and the stifling

and sulphurous atmosphere, tormented the recoiling mind with a sensation as if the hideous drama which deafened the ear and glared luridly upon the eye had been as unreal as ghastly, and was no more than the fearful creation of a dream.

As the stars paled steadily out of heaven, and the rising sun first lit with a herald redness the sky of the east, and then burned up resplendent above the horizon and flung wide over Paris a rain of light, that, as it fell on the flames below, seemed for the moment almost to quench them, ruin looked up black and grim from out the city and claimed it as her lair. Seen by the light of day Paris was no more Paris. A year before such a May sun as was now smiling out of heaven would have shone down upon boulevards that waved with trees and were gay with a butterfly-like flitting to and fro of the brightest of dresses, and along which equipages of the newest build streamed in a never-ending succession of tasteful appointments and gaily-glancing wheels. A year before the Tuileries was a



palace shining stately in the midst of gardens aglow with the blaze of colouring that belongs to flowers, and the marble staircase of the Hôtel de Ville still led up to the most brilliant saloons in Europe, and in especial to that grand gallery where, as evening drew on, innumerable lights would gleam forth, and the splendid hospitality of the Prefect of the Seine was extended to his seven thousand guests. In the May of 1870 the Man of Austerlitz still looked down from his column upon that proud capital to which he had brought the spoils of Europe; and his nephew, the Man of Sedan, was preparing with a light heart, and in concert with Ollivier, Lebœuf, and De Grammont, the ruin of his dynasty and the overthrow of France. To-day Paris had awakened from her vision of the Imperial eagle soaring triumphant above conquered Berlin, and the Empire and the glories it had promised her had vanished both into thin air. The shame with which defeat had branded her was upon her forehead, the vulture of civil war was tearing

her as if to reach her heart. Where the Tuileries had been there were ashes ; the courtly Prefect who had entertained with such municipal splendour at the Hôtel de Ville was a fugitive ; and the saloons, marbles, and paintings, the velvet-carpeted floors, and walls ablaze with ornament and gilding, of his ancient official residence, had melted beneath the torch of the incendiary into a shapeless heap of ruin. Where carriages had rolled lightly along the boulevards cannon now rumbled ; the long lines of trees that last year had waved green in the summer sun were broken by unsightly gaps where the insurgents had felled them to form abattis ; and for dresses of the newest fashion that Paris had prescribed to her daughters were to be seen only the arms and uniforms of troops. It was no longer Babylon in the hour when the siren city held forth to all the nations of the earth the cup of her enchantments ; it was Babylon when that cup had been dashed from her hand, and those who had drunk of it were gathered afar off, and cried, as they looked



on the smoke of her burning, "Alas! alas!"

In this city that was become a battle-field it was inevitable that many-tongued Rumour should stalk false and clamorous. As street after street was won by the Versaillais, and the last fragments of the armies of the Commune were driven back by five times their number of troops upon the heights of Belleville, the Paris that was *bourgeois* and timid crept out from the cellars where for days past it had been cowering in mortal terror, and having gasped with such voice as fear had left it a welcome to the army that came to deliver the capitalist from the tyranny of his workmen, set itself to discover what of the city was burned, and who of the Commune had been slain. When the smoke of Wednesday's fires was rising so thickly as to blot out in places the light of the sun — imagination began to light up more flame than, if every incendiary employed by the Commune had been a hundred-handed Briareus, the insurrection could in so sho

time have kindled. When the bodies of Wednesday's dead were choking a hundred streets, every member of the Commune, and every general that it had employed, was in turn named as having been added to the heap of slain.

Before the morning of Thursday was advanced to noon, Roland, as he conducted in such quarters of Paris as it was not actually impossible to penetrate, a search that he felt to be hopeless, for the friend who had served under him, and the woman who, now that the Commune was in the clutch of Versailles, and Versailles powerless before the Germans, was all that stood between him and a resolve to perish with the insurrection, had listened to a dozen varying reports of his own death, and the manner in which it had been brought about.

"You say, then," he asked of a knot of talkers in one of the few cafés that had ventured partly to open their doors, "that he was shot at the Château d'Eau?"

"At the Château d'Eau, citizen, and on

the very barricade where Delescluze was killed. The two bodies were found lying within a mètre of each other. 'Parbleu!' says an officer, 'here's a Saul and Jonathan who were not very lovely in their lives, but whom the chassepot has not divided.'"

"No, no, it was at Bicêtre, I tell you, that the cursed deserter met with his deserts. Vincent and he were found in the fort disguised as privates of the National Guard, and were shot instantly."

"And I, messieurs, I tell you that this poor devil of a Roland is one of the two or three hundred dead who are lying under the ruins of the Prefecture of Police. The Commune had imprisoned him there; and what was said of his flight from Paris was——" The speaker concluded with a sufficiently expressive gesture.

"It was in Mazas that they imprisoned him," said a fourth. "'I demand of you a cell in Mazas,' he told the Commune, at the last of its meetings at which he was present. They put him there; and he was

it there yesterday with the Archbishop the other hostages. Rigault had els of petroleum emptied in the prison, the devil set fire to the place with his hand."

Those she-devils of *pétroleuses*!" cried her. "They say that nearly a hundred of them were shot very early this morning behind the Luxembourg."

Not a hundred, Gustave—not more than sixty. I have it from a captain of the 60th who took part in the execution."

Parbleu! so much the worse. The more there are dead of them, the fewer there would be left to burn us in our streets."

In our beds, *mon cher*! Who in Paris is to bed at present?"

The scoundrels who were at the head of the Commune, *mon ami*. One is putting them to bed pretty rapidly."

Laugh was the answer to this remark. In a time of revolution men as well as beasts are hurried, and cannot well stop so particular as to the quality of their



wit. And then, in the Paris of May, 1871, it was something to have ever so poor a pretence for laughing, when Versailles and the Commune were vying with each other in providing so much to make even Parisians serious.

“Delescluze, Vermorel, Pyat, Vallès,” one of the group said, counting on his fingers. “Up to this moment, messieurs,” he continued, when he had finished running over his list of names, “there have been shot six and twenty of the brigands of the Commune.”

“Six and twenty! At least seven and twenty, *parbleu?*” interrupted a hearer. “*Mon Dieu!* that monsieur should forget to include the brigand Rigault! Ouf! I breathed as if the whole Commune had been taken from my chest when I saw him lie dead on the pavement.”

“You saw him!—you!” cried several.

“I, messieurs—Jules Chanleu. I had come out yesterday, towards mid-day, from—from—”

“From your cellar, Jules, *mon brave*—

Cela va sans dire," interrupted he whom Chanleu had a moment before contradicted. "When those devils of Communists are making every street in Paris as hot as if it were a *Rue d'Enfer*, what can be cooler than one's cellar?"

"From my *shop*, monsieur," replied Chanleu, with dignity. "I have a shop in the Rue G——, the street that this infamous Rigault had insulted for nearly two months by seizing a house in it, and living there in the company of his mistresses. *Parbleu!* he had all the habits of a prefect of the Empire. It seems, messieurs," continued the little shopkeeper, addressing himself to his listeners generally, "that yesterday morning my neighbour Dubois saw the brigand enter this harem of his, and ran to fetch the troops. He brings them, they surround the house, enter, and at last find Rigault hidden under a mattress in one of the magnificent bedrooms—they are in the taste of the Empire, you understand——"

“*Peste!*” said one of his hearers, “an expensive taste, that!”

“And were furnished for Madame F——. I ran out just in time to see them finish with him. The brigand struck an officer who had silenced his blasphemies with a blow on the mouth from his sword. After all, the death that he died was not of the easiest.”

Chanleu related with a hideous relish how Rigault had fallen wounded to the pavement, and had been left lying there in his agony. “If he had the *coup de grâce* at last, it was because a citoyenne who saw the execution took pity on him, and begged that it might be administered.”

“How! M. Chanleu,” said a listener, “she took pity on Rigault! And why was she not shot herself? Such brigands can only be pitied by accomplices.”

“She was English,” said Chanleu, in explanation. “One knows well,” he added, forgivingly, “that the compassion of those Englishwomen is almost as large as their feet.”

Roland started, and a wild hope shot

hrough him. "This Englishwoman," he said to Chanleu. "Will you have the goodness to describe her to me, monsieur?"

The portly little shopkeeper stared at him astonished; but was polite enough to attempt a portrait. "She was tall," he said, "had magnificent brown eyes, and dark-brown hair that might also have been magnificent, but was cut short in the eccentric fashion of her country, to give her the Amazon air that Englishwomen were known to covet. For the rest, *une taille impératrice*, the carriage almost of a *Parisienne*, a face rather expressive than handsome, and for age, perhaps twenty years."

As far as it went the description was that of Isabel Cameron as she might appear to

Parisian shopkeeper, and Roland went out of the café feeling ten times more confident than when he had entered it that she was alive, and in Paris. If it was indeed she, her dress was once more that of her sex. He was glad of it; few sights had ever more deeply offended his eyes

than that of his cousin as she had appeared on first presenting herself to him at the Ministry of War, a haughty Amazon, wearing, but scarcely disguised by the garb of a man. Why was she still in Paris? and why, if she were the heroine of the incident narrated by this little bourgeois, should she expose her life in the very situations where she was most perilously liable to lose it in the downrush of the Commune? What had been her history for the past three weeks? He had dreaded that she might have fallen under the suspicion of the Versaillais in attempting to leave Paris, and have been deprived of liberty, or even shot; and in perilling his life to seek her he had thought rather to follow her from a world out of which his friends, his hopes, and as it seemed to him even his country, had perished, than indulged in any expectation of finding her alive. Had he chanced to discover to a certainty that the woman he loved was dead, he would have felt free to join forthwith a party of those insurgents whom he

despised ; and, putting himself at their head, and crying, "*Je suis Roland—le colonel Roland—suivez-moi !*" would have fallen fighting, if not against the Prussians, at least against their cruel, cowardly allies of Versailles. There was hope, however, that she lived, and while it lasted he would live on to seek for her.

All the rest of that week he failed equally of lighting upon the girl that he was in quest of, and the death that he risked in searching for her. Day by day, the miserable, cowardly tragedy blackened and dwindled towards its close, and the living adherents of the Commune grew fewer, and its dead lay thicker in the streets. On the 26th of May the troops attacked Belleville ; and the disheartened and starving defenders of that stronghold, their ammunition failing, and themselves decimated by the hail of shells that rained upon them, offered to surrender if life were granted to them. The commanders of the Versailles forces refused the boon demanded of them ; and, advancing from two sides upon Belleville,



carried a succession of desperately-defended barricades, and inflicted upon their insurgent countrymen who manned them such a doom as, in the world that was before the Christian one, pagan and merciless Rome was accustomed to deal out to her revolted slaves. It was Sunday evening, the 28th of May, when the army at last rested from its bloody work, and the smoke began to clear from the park of the Buttes Chaumont, and to reveal corpses strewed there in the place of fallen leaves. The Revolution was crushed. Of the inhabitants of the French capital, twenty thousand, many of them women and children, lay dead. "Peace," said Thiers, "has been restored to Paris." Peace ! Peace ! Not such angels were they who echoed the cry as the seraphs that sang by night upon the plains of Bethlehem, but two of the host of the fallen, Moloch and Apollyon by name, whom for seven days now the peacemaking of the Versailles had tempted to absent themselves from their place in hell.

Among other shows that the victors pr

vided at this time for those of the Parisians who were neither slain nor prisoners, nor too frightened to venture into the streets, was that of the body of Delescluze. It lay in the church of St. Elizabeth; not, as princes lie, in state, but rather *in terrorem*; that, as the laws of the past sought to terrify possible offenders against society by suspending in chains the actual one that had been put to death, so the sight of this revolution-maker dead might act as a lesson to surviving demagogues. As it happened, too, there was some doubt concerning identity, for the corpse that had been dragged from under a barricade and taken to St. Elizabeth's Church was so hideously disfigured about the face and neck that the attestations of a great number of witnesses were required before the Government and public could make up their minds that the only heroic figure of that strange assembly, the Commune, had perished with it. Perhaps, of the crowds that flocked to look on the dead, all were not there from motives of curiosity or insult; and one or two might



come to do the old man reverence. One came, at least, who had thought nobly of Delescluze while he lived, and whose respect the death that he had died was not likely to diminish—a young man with fair hair, and short, fair beard, who delayed his visit to the church until the very day that was appointed for the removal of the body, and who wore the uniform of the Eastern Railway service.

Roland stood for some minutes looking attentively at the face that was said to be that of his colleague of a month before. It had been very noble in life, and the commanding features, ample forehead, and searching eye, had gained in dignity from their contrast with the shrunken and emaciated body. Decay, however, was fast blotting from the charnel features of the thing that lay in the Church of St. Elizabeth the few resemblances to human lineaments that had remained when the dead man was dragged from under the barricade where he fell; and looking at the ghastly relic of mortality before him, the beholder

almost doubted of its identity. "*That, Delescluze!*" he muttered to himself.

He was stooping closer, and seeking to realize that this horror which the eyes shrank away from looking on could be the face that in life had been so reverend, when there was a sudden stir among the persons nearest to him, and he felt himself seized by the arm. "You are Roland," a voice hissed in his ear.

"I!—not at all," he answered, trying to shake from his arms the grasp that three pairs of hands had fastened upon them. "I!—who says so?"

"I say so!" a woman cried, bursting excitedly forward. "Oh! I didn't need to look twice at him, the wretch, to know him again, for all that he has put on a Prussian uniform. Ugh! you ruffian, you regret now, I dare say, that you ever kept me coming day after day to the Ministry of War, begging for the release of my husband—my martyred husband, that's a saint in heaven now, thanks to you and your crew. Shoot him, gentlemen—shoot him! good-

ness knows he murdered all he could of your side when his was uppermost."

While she was speaking, Roland had quietly suffered himself to be searched and bound. His captors were a party of the Marine Brigade, and he could see that others were guarding the doors of the church. There was no hope of escape, and he resigned himself to the death that confronted him, and thought only of meeting it with dignity.

The officer who had first spoken to him seemed to be puzzled by his prisoner's calmness. "You are Roland—yes, you are Roland," he repeated, as if to assure himself of the fact. "You hear this Englishwoman declare that you are he."

Roland made no answer.

"You admit, then, that you are Colonel Roland?"

"I!—not at all," said Roland. "But I were to say that I am Tirobois, an engineer of the Eastern Railway service, and that I am just come from Dijon to Paris of what use would that be to save me

You have made up your mind, it seems, that I am Roland."

By this time, the rumour that a visitor to the body of Delescluze had been denounced as his predecessor at the Ministry of War had spread through the church, and a crowd came pushing forward, eager to stare at and endeavour to identify the person arrested. "It is—it is!" "*Parbleu!* no, Roland was a younger man than this one." "Older, *mon cher*, older, by five years at least;" these, and a score of opinions besides were instantly and recklessly hazarded.

The lieutenant in command of the party of arrest continued to press his prisoner with questions, and Roland to refuse to answer or to reply evasively. It was characteristic of the man that, on seeing this uncertainty of his captors, he should restrain the declaration that had trembled on his tongue that he was Colonel Roland, and while expecting nothing but death, and resolutely prepared for it, could not bring himself to hasten that death by any avowal of his identity. She by whom he had been

denounced was in the mean time loud in her protests that all doubt of the identity of the prisoner was needless, and an insult to her.

“ Oh, sir, I know him ! ” said the lady to the officer who was interrogating Roland. “ Heaven knows, I have seen him often enough at the Ministry of War to know him. I’m sure it looks as if it was Providence that had brought me here this morning to see the last of that old wretch, Delescluze, that I had been talking with only the minute before he met his death. It’s a strange thing that your Government should put the bodies of such creatures in churches. A good high gallows, forty feet high or so—such as the Bible tells us Haman was hung on for poisoning Pharaoh—would be the best place for them, if you must have people to look at them.”

“ *Parbleu !* ” said the officer, “ does she mean to talk us deaf ? What does she say about hanging ? ”

“ It seems to me, *mon lieutenant*,” said a sailor, “ that she wants us to hang the prisoner in the church here.”

"I'm sure, sir," said the lady, "I don't know why you shouldn't. Scripture tells us that in the time of the Jews such wretches were put to death wherever the Kings of Israel found them, even if they were hiding in the ark, or under the altar. The church would be none the worse for a Communist having been hung in it."

"*Elle est religieuse*," said the puzzled lieutenant, turning from her. "These holy women are always bloodthirsty; and this one more so than common, that is all."

As the prisoner persisted in confessing nothing, and by implication declared himself to be Tirobois, an engineer in the employment of the Eastern Railway Company, he was at last dragged off to the Prefecture of Police, established for the present in the Barracks of the Cité. Arrived there, the interrogatory was resumed; but this time by a commissary of police. "Your name, you say," began this functionary, writing it down as he spoke, "is Tirobois. Where were you born?—in what year?"

"I have nothing more to tell you about myself," the prisoner answered.



The commissary made a note of the reply; and then imperturbably proceeded with his questions, putting them in the order prescribed by law. "Your father's name," then, was Tirobois, it seems. What was the name of your mother?" he asked.

Roland started at the question as if it had been a blow; and then, suddenly stepping forward, "Bah!" he said, "of what use is this acting, and these pretences? Yes, I am Colonel Roland. Before I am shot, monsieur, will you have the goodness to let me have pen, ink, and paper, and the freedom of my hands for a few minutes?"

"You can write what dying messages you may wish to leave in the prison at Versailles, mon colonel," replied the commissary. "Summary executions ceased this morning; if you are shot, you will have at least the consolation of knowing that it is by the sentence of a court-martial."

CHAPTER VI.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

SUNSHINE has seldom been brighter in Paris than during the summer that followed the fall of the Commune. In a little while the dead had all been put away under the earth ; of the surviving adherents of the red flag many were in prison, and the remainder exiled, or in hiding ; and the crowds whom the charming weather, and a curiosity to inspect the ruin wrought when this dying Lamson of an insurrection sought to pull down a city upon its head, had drawn to the French capital, might pace its streets, and see nothing of either dead iconoclasts or living. A year or two, and the sun that looked down upon Paris would find her as old—a smiling, beautiful siren, that

spread forth the most costly and tasteful of banquets, and called on the wealthy of the earth to come and feast with her. Yesterday the lights had of a sudden burned blue and sepulchral, and the wine had turned to blood, and the guests fled, shuddering; but yesterday slept with many other days, its forerunners, and to-day knew nothing of it. In Paris he who would enjoy must be of the present, and look neither to the future nor the past. A storm has scarcely done raging, another may be gathering for to-morrow; but for the moment the streets have been cleared of the dead, and the dye of murder is washed from the pavement; and Paris, the dainty Circe, smiles up to us in the old shameless, fearless beauty, and bids us with the merriest of voices "*Carpe diem.*" And where should we snatch it, if not in a city that between June and June has seen an Empire upset, and a Republic of money-bags founded in its stead, and the united *bourgeoisie* of France chivalrously buying out the invader; then a fierce attempt of

Lazarus to snatch from the hand of Dives the purse out of which the latter was ransoming France ; and lastly, the triumphant entry of Dives at the head of as many thousands of their prisoners as the Prussians would restore to him, and his merciless slaughter of Lazarus, his wife, and children, in retaliation for the dog's revolt. To-morrow it may be the turn of Lazarus, and Dives' throat be cut on the smoking ruins of his palace ; but as yet the lights that burn in that palace are festal ones, and the guests that it contains were invited there. "Eat, drink, and be merry." Death knocked at our gate yesterday, and the blow he gave had all but brought our banqueting-hall upon our heads ; he may pass this way to-morrow, and shiver it with a summons that shall be the last ; but as yet, though there be writing on the wall, the wall itself stands sound, Paris has wine and women, and we may crown our cups with nectar and our heads with flowers, and be merry and mad until the last hour that it is called to-day. Enjoy ! enjoy !

enjoy ! Had Belshazzar been wise with the wisdom of Paris, he would have troubled neither that of Chaldea, nor that of Israel, but would have left the terrible *Mene, Mene* to blaze undeciphered on his palace wall, and have sung and revelled until the very moment that the arrow of the Mede was in his throat.

As yet, too, not our own lives merely, but the lives and liberties of our enemies also are ours, and while we enjoy we may revenge. Our entry into Paris was, it is true, as that of Juggernaut, and in its progress there were crushed out twenty thousand lives, but some ten or twelve thousand more are in our prisons, and the desert islands of New Caledonia hunger for exiles, and the plain of Satory is athirst for blood. Let Lazarus prepare, if he will, to seek in heaven for the mercy that the Scriptures say is there accorded to him ; but while the government of France is in the hands of the Assembly of Bordeaux, let him not hope for it from us. We may dally awhile indeed with his suspense, but

it shall be as the wild beast trifles with its prey,—with paw upraised to strike.

All June the miserable gleanings from the harvest-field that during the last days of May the army had busied itself in reaping lay in the prisons where the victors had bestowed them, awaiting the assembling of the courts-martial that were to decide as to their fate. June became July, July passed into August, and still the sword of military justice, the motto engraven upon which has since the days of Brennus, and for centuries before the Gauls sacked Rome, been *Væ victis*, hung suspended above the heads of the imprisoned insurgents by a thin thread of delay. Fair and pleasant shone the summer, still fairer was the autumn when bountiful Nature comforted with an abundant harvest and a laughing vintage her war-worn daughter, France; but the sun that in Normandy looked down upon strong arms labouring among the corn, and in Champagne on deft fingers gathering grapes, looked at Versailles through prison-bars, and tried in vain to

call an answering light into faces that through the longest and brightest summer day saw not its beauty, but the shadow of that death which the morrow was to bring forth.

This shadow stretched far away, falling sometimes upon Normandy farm-houses, sometimes upon homes placed near the sea of the South, or in sight of the Pyrenean hills, and from which there had gone forth a son or brother to Paris, and, as it had proved, to the Commune. It reached across the Channel even, and darkened an island hearth or two, by which there sat men and women related to the very few Englishmen who had thrown in their lot with the insurrection, or who were bound by ties of consanguinity or friendship to some French apostle of the faith that a nation should be governed by Trades Unions of its workmen, who had met his death in the attempt to convert Paris into a supreme expression of his idea, or was lying in the prisons of Versailles, awaiting the hour when he should be sent into slavery in New Caledonia or at

the *bagne*, or called upon to seal his testimony against the might plutocratic with his blood. Into few English homes did the shadow steal more darkly than into a lonely, still, old farmhouse, buried deep among the Cumbrian hills.

Far away in the heart of those other mountains that rose parched and rugged under the burning sky of Southern France, Château Roland lay deserted of all but two old servants, and if to be inhabited again, never more by a Roland. A grave and a letter—in such a welcome had ended the journey that Isabel and Clifford had made from Paris to the South. In the grave there was inurned the gentle heart of Alison Roland, never more to be wounded, never to throb again with pangs of love and sorrow; the letter contained a message from Louis Roland to Isabel, entreating her, should she return to the château in his absence, to await in the home that had been hers for years his return from seeking her in Paris, or if there arrived instead of him the news of his death, that she would accept





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from him the gift of that home in the spirit in which a sister might accept the dying bequest of a brother. She waited ; and within twenty-four hours there came the news that Colonel Roland had been arrested, and was lying in prison at Versailles, awaiting the sentence of a court-martial.

Isabel left for Paris, and Clifford to return to the ruined home that three-fourths of a year before he had forsaken to seek for his sister, after having followed his grandfather to the grave. There was no question at present of marriage between the lovers ; the thoughts of both were with that cousin and dear friend whose life was imperilled because of his having sought for her whom he had not known was as much lost to him as if the grave had divided them. It was not because Henry Clifford shrank from meeting the comrade from whom he had won the woman that he loved, that he was now leaving France ; for Roland had never made known to him either his affection for her or her conditional promise to become his wife ; nor had Isabel yet disclosed to her lover

that, though Louis might name her sister, he had desired that she should be something dearer to him. Schemes for the future drew Clifford to England ; and at the same time that he was resolved that no danger to himself should keep him from being present at the trial of his friend, he wished to spend the interval that might remain to him in the country of his birth, to bid it adieu, and to seek there means of quitting it and the Old World for ever.

He came, then, to Wastdale, leaving his betrothed to seek Roland in prison, and obtain from him the authority necessary for selling the old château, and applying the purchase-money to the expenses of his defence. The prisoners were to be permitted to provide themselves with counsel, and little as was to be hoped from this privilege in the face of the fact that they were to be tried by tribunals composed wholly of military men, Clifford was eager that advantage should be taken of it to the utmost. It seemed to him that the Thiers Government would find it impossible to put to death as

a deserter a soldier whose only military oath had been sworn to the Empire. If Roland were sent to New Caledonia, Isabel and her lover had thoughts—wild and generous—of following the exile as far as the Isle of Noumea or of Pines.

It might have been yesterday that he had left Wastdale, so unchanged was the tiny hamlet when he re-entered it. He looked round him, feeling vaguely that he must have been absent from the place for great part of a century, and asking himself why the spectacle of a church, the grey farmhouses, and even the name above the low-browed doorway of the Huntsman, were the church, the houses and the name that he had known of old. He thought of that sultan of Eastern story whom a magician bade dip his head in a basin of water, and on whom, when he obeyed, there crowded, as it seemed, the events and miseries of years; to dissolve themselves when he looked up again, into the vision of an instant. If the feeling that lay heavy at his heart, and the memories that rankled in his mind, bore faithful

itness, he had been absent from Wastdale
r half a lifetime; if his eyes might be
usted, not a day. Did he look into his
ind he saw unroll itself there a pano-
ma that seemed endless, of scenes spread
ver the breadth of Europe, and showing,
ow the Alps gleaming like a band of snow-
aidens, their pale cheeks warmed into a
ish at sunrise and sunset by the kisses of
a sun, now the moon rising white over
nice, and anon Château Roland, and the
sion north and west of Metz where he had
ight as a lieutenant of *franc-tireurs*; and
ris, as the Commune had revealed it to
n, a city of wild visions, blinding as
htning flashes, and lurid at the last with
me, and discoloured miserably with blood.
have lived through so much was to have
between him and his life of a year ago
gulf, not of years, but of such moments as
len more cruelly than years—the gulf
at divides the man from the boy. And
en, as his eyes fell upon the lonely mere
d the familiar faces of the mountains, it
uld seem to him that all which had



passed since he had last beheld them was visionary ; and that the magician, Time, as potent as he of the Eastern legend, had but plunged him for a moment in the sea of the world, and in that moment had oppressed him with a nightmare of fierce horror, that to his sleeping senses had seemed eternal, and now that he was awake again, proved to have been the briefest of dreams.

There was no change visible in the old house as he approached, yet to look at it oppressed him with a feeling as of changes having been wrought in his absence that deepened as he stepped into the garden. On this fresh morning of early June, when the sun was shining tenderly after a night of rain, half-blown roses should have been unfolding their fairest leaves, and the last of the lilies-of-the-valley have peeped like white forest-fays through curtains of cool and shining green, and pansy and geranium have brightened, and honeysuckle have made fragrant the air he breathed and the earth he trod on. The roses were shrivelled and few ; lily and pansy were gone, and in



their place grew weeds ; and only the honeysuckle bloomed wild and luxuriant, and drooped in heavy sprays towards the waving grass. The fairest flower of the garden had been robbed from it in the summer that was past ; and all through the autumn and winter those that were left had waited in vain for the return and the care of their mistress. Summer was bright again over England, and where there were roses there fell tender on their lips the kisses of June ; but smile and kiss were here lavished in vain. Forsaken by Margaret, her garden refused to smile.

Clifford turned with that thought heavy at his heart, and went into the house. He felt, as its dim shadow closed round him, and he passed from the shining June morning into the darkness and silence of the still dwelling, as if he were entering a tomb. Where were the faces that had brightened this dim homestead, the cheerful voices that should have sounded in it ? There should three faces have looked welcome, three voices have spoken it, those of an old and a



young man, and a girl. Memory gave back those faces as he had often seen them—the one hale, blithe, and venerable, with something of a cynical and obstinate look in the eye and mouth, and rugged, strongly-marked features showing under hair of a snowy white;—the second strong, open, and resolute, with a firmly-cut mouth, and nothing dreamy, and but little that was tender in the eye; the youngest as the face of some creature who was half a woman and half an embodied sunbeam, a face small of feature, but perfect, with eyes of a blue between sky and violet, that shone out, melting and tender, from beneath a shining of sun-kissed hair. They rose up bright and loving before him, these faces, and he looked at them for a moment, and then around him, with that feeling again oppressing him of his being in a tomb. It was no dream, then, that he had been long away from Wastdale; the sense of his having aged and changed crept on him once more, as he found himself in that house from which the faces that had made it home had



been taken, and given, the one to churchyard earth, another to a wilderness across thirteen thousand miles of ocean, and the fairest and dearest to —— Alas! there were things that parted more widely than even churchyard and sea.

In leaving this changed dwelling to follow her who had brought shame and death into it, he had arranged with the one old servant of the family that she should charge herself with the care of it until his return. He heard the old creature moving now in the rooms above him, and going up to her, sent her to bring him the letters that had reached her the nine months that he had been away. There was one four months old from New Zealand, and he read it first, and learned that his brother was settled in the district of Wanganoui, with fair hopes of prospering, and begged for the news from home. He took pen and paper to answer, but presently pushed them from him, and deferred the wretched task. No, not in this, the first hour of his return to that house from which the light of home had

perished, could he bring himself to reply to his brother's messages to sister and grandfather, and questions concerning them, that the one was outcast and the other dead.

He spent part of the morning in painful and gloomy thought, and alone with the memories that the sight of this home that was home no more to him had awakened, but found their company at last grow intolerable, and to break from them went out and wandered off into the hills. There, for weeks to come, he passed great part of his time. The summer was very fair around him; there came days that were as bright as any Mother Earth gave to her children when she and they were young; but the intolerable memories that haunted him cast, as it were, a darkness on the prospect, and paled for him even the glow of summer. He dreamed sometimes, indeed, of eyes whose glance was eloquent to him—of a cheek into whose paleness love-words spoken by him had power to call a blush; but even this vision would quickly fade, and there would rise instead before him the gloomy

shadow of a cell, and the face of a prisoner who waited within it to exchange it for a grave. Brave he saw it always—that beloved and noble face, but marked as it were by the nearness of a ghastly death.

June and July passed, and Clifford had spent them in Wastdale; but one cloudless August afternoon he climbed Scawfell, and saw the face of the Lakeland smile up to him, and stood long looking on it as on a face lovely and beloved that his eyes would rest on never more. In some new land of the South, perhaps, the phantom of that fair sight would rise upon him in his dreams, and for one sweet moment he would think it real, and wake in the next to find it fled. A few days later, and he was in London.

By a will that Anthony Clifford had made while Margaret was still fondly loved and innocent, the little money that the old man had to leave was to be equally divided between his three grand-children; but the house, its contents, and an acre or two of grazing-land were to become the property of the girl. The first task of her brother

on his return from France had been to prove this will ; and he had then written to James Clifford in New Zealand and inserted advertisement after advertisement in the London papers, with but faint hopes that Daisy would ever reply to them. As it happened, however, about the end of July a London solicitor, who refused his client's address, or to give any information whatever concerning her, replied to the advertisement ; and, acting for her under a power of attorney, drew her share of old Anthony's money, and gave orders for the real estate of which she was the heiress to be sold for such sum as it would fetch.

If ever Clifford had felt it in his heart to curse Margaret, it was when she availed herself of the bequest of the fond old man whom her shame had killed to sell the home that she had forsaken. Their father and grandfather had both been born in it ; and the latter had desired in his will that if ever she parted with the place it should be only to one of her brothers. Out of his own share of the legacy he paid a year's

wages to the old servant; and abandoning possession to her till the sale should be completed, went up to London. He suspected his sister to be there, and also that the project hinted at by Dallas in writing to Lord Ralston had been carried out, and that Margaret Clifford was now upon the stage.

The Bijou Theatre, the declared lessee of which was Miss Lily De Vere, and the probable owner Sir Frederick Alsager, was to re-open in another month with an extravagantly-written specimen of the inane burlesque that in 1871 supplied to London playgoers such entertainment as Bully Bottom might have relished while his ass's head was still upon his shoulders: "*On dit*," declared the *Age*, in its weekly gossip concerning things theatrical, "that Miss Pearlle Stuart, the little American *débutante* whose success in the minor rôle she fills at the Folly has been so unequivocal, will be the Diana of Mr. Archer Munden's forthcoming burlesque of 'Endymion,' from which great things are ex-

pected at the Bijou. The piece is said to be in the smartest manner of its clever author, the brilliant editor, and now the proprietor, of one of our best-known Society journals." "Who," said the *Limelight*, echoing the announcement, "has created a new era in English journalism. There are carpers at our Society journals, and harsh things have been said about them, but we venture to assert in Mr. Munden's case, without foundation. He has never overstepped the boundaries of legitimate satire, and the tone of that satire is so happy and humorous, the laughter in which he indulges is so free from malice, that we could almost venture to declare that the objects of his attacks would be the first to join in the laugh against themselves. We wish this new burlesque success, and its author a long and satisfactory connection with the stage."

Clifford, in the search that he commenced through the papers of the day arriving in London, lighted presently upon the paragraph in the *Age*, and had h

attention directed by it to that promising American *débutante*, Miss Pearlle Stuart. He went the same evening to the Folly, and in walking to the theatre stopped before a shop-window filled with portraits of professional beauties, and examined them. Miss Pearlle Stuart was there, lightly attired in a costume consisting of little more than a quiver and a pair of butterfly wings, her dress as Cupid; and in 'Miss Stuart' the young man saw his sister. He felt an impulse rise up in him to shatter the window, and snatching at the photograph, to tear it into fragments, but subdued it, and walked on.

The burlesque opened shortly before ten, and for more than an hour he sat in one of the stalls, feverishly expecting it. A light, two-act trifle was being rattled off as he entered, and finding from the playbill how short it was, he waited patiently for the first ten minutes, and then was seized with a feeling that it would never end. He saw nothing of it, and heard as little; and the stage, and indeed the whole



theatre, presented itself dimly to him as a murmur of voices and a glare of lights. Once or twice he looked round him, and caught, so that for all his life to come he remembered them and they were associated in his mind with this evening, the expression in a face or two, the attitude of a boy hanging half over the gallery rails, and a few trifling particulars connected with the decorations of the house and stage.

Cupid came on somewhat late in the burlesque, in which his part was but a secondary one. He flitted brilliantly forward on his appearance, a gay little god in a charming want of costume, that set off to perfection the beauties of his face and shape. For a while, the lustrous and laughing eyes of the beautiful God of Love failed to notice the burning look that sought them across a foot or two of orchestra, out of the second row of stalls. Tripping off and reappearing, flinging from her the sorry puns that were all the wit of the burlesque with a piquant carelessness that lent them unfailing zest, the girl lived her half-hour on the boards of

the Folly, at once the best actress that trod them, and a child that Venus, even the Venus whom Tannhauser loved and Swinburne sang of, might have been proud to claim. After a while, Cupid began to sing; not as immortals are wont to sing in high Olympus, but such words as burlesque-writers furnish, set to such an air as composers of the music that befits burlesque have in general the happy tact to wed to them.

Margaret was half-way through her song, when her brother knew that she had seen him. The liquid, lark-like notes faltered all at once and drooped; and she started, and looked wildly to the wings, as if she were tempted to dart through them and from the stage. A slight hiss rose from the pit, and wincing at the sound as if it stung her, the girl recovered her self-possession, and sang bravely and brilliantly on. She even tripped up closer to the footlights, and bending slightly and gracefully forward, sang, as it seemed, more directly to the audience, but as Clifford knew, more de-



fiantly at him. He heard nothing of the rhymed trivialities that she was chanting so wildly and gaily. "See, brother," she seemed to him to be singing, "what less than a year has changed me to—what division a few months have put between you and me."

His song over, Cupid stood smiling and applauded for a moment, and then ran off behind the scenes; and the young man rose, and left the theatre. He went round to the stage-door and waited there, thinking he knew not what, and seeing yet before him the bright-haired, bright-eyed creature with the scanty golden tunic and the gleaming butterfly wings. Three or four carriages were near, and he looked at them, and wondered which was waiting for his sister and Dallas. After a while the building began to empty, and by the time that the audience of the burlesque were nearly dispersed, the actors had changed their dresses, and were leaving by the stage-door.

She whom he waited for came out one of the last, and, as he expected, had a com-

panion. A slight scream broke from her as she saw him ; and then she shrank away, and left the man to whose arm she had been clinging to put himself between her and the apparition that confronted them, and from which she recoiled.

“ D—— it, sir,” her escort said, angrily, “ don’t you see that the lady has nothing to say to you ? ”

Clifford made no answer, but stared strangely at him.

The other stepped towards him as if to thrust him aside, but before he could do so Clifford had grasped him by the arm.

“ No,” he said, conceiving the movement to be made with the intention of passing him, “ not until I have your name.”

There would have been a scuffle between the men in another moment, had not Margaret sprung to the taller of the two, and clung appealingly to him.

“ Don’t strike him, Arthur,” she entreated, “ he’s my brother.”

He whom she addressed was as unlike Dallas as a man of thirty, tall, dark-com-



plexioned, and black-bearded, can be unlike another of three and twenty, fair, slightly-made, and beardless.

“Your brother, Pearlie?” he replied, in a voice equally good-humoured and insolent. “I thought relations of this sort were generally called cousins. Keep quiet, d—you, you idiot!” he said impatiently, to Clifford. “Do you want to bring a crowd about us? Let my arm alone for a moment, and if it’s my name you want you shall have it.”

As soon as released he took out a card-case, threw, rather than gave, a card to his assailant; and then handed his companion into the carriage that was waiting for them, and sprang in beside her. Her brother was about to turn away without further interfering; but something—some memory of their dead childhood, perhaps—pleaded with him, and made him stop, and say softly:—

“Daisy.”

The girl looked up, and their eyes met; ~~in~~ in hers the hard light of the woman who

parted with her modesty, and tells
lf that, at least, it is brilliantly lost.
ll you come with me?" he entreated.
ne with me, and all shall be forgiven

e shook her head without speaking,
rew back into the corner of the carriage
e instant that it drove away. Clifford
d after it till it disappeared; and then
ed towards a lamp, and read the name
ved upon the slip of pasteboard that
ld.

Lord Arthur Lydbroke. After the
et the peer! Lord Arthur Lydbroke.
o! we rise in the *demi-monde*," he
out, with a cruel laugh.

tore the card into fragments, threw
from him, and watched them as the
whirled them over and over in the
y road. "Go your ways, Daisy,"
id, addressing them.

CHAPTER VII.

DAMOCLES.

“If it were to begin again,” said Roland to himself, “it is possible that I would not serve the Commune, but it is certain that I would not serve Versailles.”

Many days had followed each other into the tomb of the Past since the fires that the insurgents lit to consume Paris had been quenched in their blood, and still the Communists who lay in prison were untried. Torture, if we may trust modern jurisprudence, is abolished throughout Christendom. We have done away with the rack, certainly, or preserve but a specimen or two in our museums to bear witness to the inhumanity of our ancestors, but the mind, as well as the body, can be

enched and strained, and the kind of work employed in torturing the former is known as suspense. There are no shrieks of agony occasioned by its employment; no limb is dislocated; the victim is not mangled and distorted into an outrage upon the human form and a frightful testimony to the inhumanity of his persecutors; nor are the services of a torturer necessary, nor does a surgeon look on to apportion the great load of agony that the shaken frame must bear. Justice does nothing, in fact, but seize on a political or other offender whose offence is punishable with death, and in delay dooming him to it. It is recorded that there were sufferers in the Middle Ages, at whose sinews the racks of the period might tug and tug, without eliciting a cry from their resolute lips, and whose endurance the Middle Ages attributed to their having sold themselves to the enemy of Mankind and received from him, in part of the price of their souls, a demoniacal capacity for supporting bodily pain. In the case of the mind that is being

strained, Hope verily does for it that which the monks of the Inquisition, and other demons of the old time of earth whose labour was to make it hell, supposed their Master to be in the habit of doing for the body; but let suspense rack on and on, and there is danger, however tenderly tended. Hope may minister to the sufferer, that in the end his brain-strings will crack.

Roland had borne this torture of suspense for fully three months now; but his mind was nothing shaken yet, nor his courage other than cheerful and admirably steadfast. The gnawing certainty that he would in the end be doomed to death, and the gnawing uncertainty as to how long his trial would be deferred, might prey on him like twin vultures; but had there been any to watch him as Ione and Panthea watched Prometheus, they would have said, as did the two bright Oceanides when they looked up to where the giant hung on Caucasus, and saw the Furies hastening to their banquet, "Firm, not proud." He had the susceptibility to mental anguish of all men of strong

ons, but battling with this, and dominating it, and lifting the wavering-minded unionist, the general whose head led to the attack of an enemy while yet stood still, into a hero and a king in, there was the noblest and the truest age. Not the wild battle courage was that maddens the brain and fires the soul, and sends men charging furiously to the cannon's mouth, but the greater rarer heroism that is calm through the torture of suspense, calmer still while sentence is being spoken, calmest and steadfast in the hour of death. Nelson splendidly at Trafalgar, and Nelson is known to be with all one's heart admired and loved; but contrasted with old Hugh Mercer, turning to his brother-sufferer to cheerfully, "Be of good cheer, Master Hugh, and play the man, for we shall this night such a candle in England, as, by God's grace, shall never be put out," the paleosis of the greatest of seamen pales could pale the splendour of a brightly shining age before that of the sun, and shows



thing of him. He heard nothing of the signed invitations that she was chanting wildly and gaily. "See, brother," it seemed to him to be singing, "what is this a year has changed me to—what is even a few months have put between me and me."

He went over, Cupid stood smiling at him for a moment, and then ran behind the scenes; and the young man went and left the theatre. He went round to the stage-door and waited there, thinking he knew not what, and seeing yet before him the light-haired, bright-eyed creature and the many golden tunics and the jeweled lady's robes. Three or four women were seen, and he looked at them, and wondered which was waiting for his son and sister. After a while the huddling began to waver, and by the time that the entrance of the ladies was nearly disposed, he saw that they had changed their dresses, and were leaving by the stage-door.

She whom he waited for came out in a blue dress, not, as he expected, had a son

the Folly, at once the best actress that trod them, and a child that Venus, even the Venus whom Tannhauser loved and Swinburne sang of, might have been proud to claim. After a while, Cupid began to sing; not as immortals are wont to sing in high Olympus, but such words as burlesque-writers furnish, set to such an air as composers of the music that befits burlesque have in general the happy tact to wed to them.

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the German eagle, he would have claimed as his reward one commensurate with the greatness of the service done to her—that she should set none other of her citizens above him. It was the old story of the days of chivalry—the knight loved the lady, and would lay the world at her feet if he could, but in return she was to give him herself.

The thought of that which might have been haunted him constantly as he lay in prison, and contrasted itself with that which was. He had spent some of the time that hung thus heavy on his hands in writing a short history of the Defence of Metz; and on one of the last days of August he set the seal of *Finis* to the little book. It was to go out presently into that world from which its author was shut off; and finding his thoughts more tolerable when he wrote them down than when he left them to prey at will upon his spirit, Roland took his pen again, and occupied himself in rapidly composing a history of the part that he had played under the

Commune. "If it were to begin again," he said to himself when he had completed the brief narrative, and was one morning reading it over, "it is possible that I would not serve the Commune, but it is certain that I would not serve Versailles."

It was the eve of his long-deferred trial that found him speaking thus. Even the Bordeaux Assembly could not keep its prisoners untried for ever; and in these early days of September the courts-martial that were to dispose of the imprisoned Communists were at last assembling. The hideous severities exercised by the army upon its entry into the capital had given rise to a strong feeling of reaction; and not even the Parisian *bourgeoisie*, although fright had for a time made them something more than cruel, and shaking in person and suffering in purse, they had yelled deliriously "*Fusillez-les!*" but were now inclined to the admission that a life for every stone of the Tuileries, and a hundred for each of the murdered hostages, had been very nearly punishment enough. The

Government, it was suggested, might shoot one or two of the guiltiest of its prisoners, imprison a few hundreds more, and let the great body go. Public opinion had in so far an influence that the Government resolved to content itself with letting the great body of its prisoners go into exile and slavery combined in New Caledonia or into simple slavery at the *bagne*; and to cease shooting the leaders that were in its hands as soon as the protests occasioned by the executions should become dangerously loud. As well as if he had been already standing with his eyes bandaged before a firing party, Roland knew that of the lives taken his would be one of the first.

He did not regret that he had fought for the Commune; all his regret was absorbed in the thought that he had lost. Oh! to have failed, when victory would have given him the means of attempting so much for France. He had known what these Parisian workmen were, out of whom he had hoped to shape an army; but he had shut

his eyes to the deficiencies of the weapon, and had thought only of the blow that he might strike with it. "Blind! blind!" he told himself: "but that which blinded me was my love for France."

In one of the few interviews with him that were permitted to Isabel Cameron before his trial, she objected, in answer to something he had said, that the Commune would never, under any circumstances, have renewed the war with Germany. "As if I had ever asked myself," he answered, "after the day that brought me to Paris and showed me with what miserable wretches I was linked, what the Commune would have done! It was enough for me that I saw that the moment the Revolution had chances of success Bismarck would attack us. He knew very well that it would not pay him his milliards—could not, if it had wished to do so."

"He would have crushed the insurrection, and afterwards have wrung twice the sum from France."

"Was that fear to keep me back? If my

enemies who are about to take my life were to say to me, after they have condemned me to be shot, 'We will give you your life but degrade you,' I should answer, 'Take it; it is valueless to me on such terms.' I would have made the same choice for my country."

"After they have condemned you to be shot," she repeated, her lips growing white. "They will not dare—you had no share in the crimes of the Commune, and it is only those who have shared in them that are in danger of death. Why do you speak as you were one of them?"

Forgetting for the moment the gratification that was between them, Roland stretched out his hand to take hers. "You look pale," he said. "Did you think, then, that they would spare me? They will shoot me among the first. It is better as it is—I have nothing to bind me to life."

She shuddered, and grew white as death. "They will spare you—they will spare you," she said, faintly.

"Ah!" he said, "it is this that men

the bitterness of a death like mine. Be **brave** for me, Bella—as brave for me as you **were** for yourself.”

“They will spare you,” she repeated.

“And when you find that they will not,” **he** answered, “you must say to yourself, as **I** say sometimes, when my heart cries to me **that** it was made to beat for a long time **yet**, ‘I die young, it is true, but I die by a **rapid** death, by an honourable death; and **this** death is my victory, for it redeems my **errors**.’ I am dying for France—not as I **would** have died could I have had my choice—but I am dying for France. I leave a **respected** name, and a courageous example. **Oh**, yes, death is my victory.”

The girl’s tears were all her answer.

“And then, if they spared me—but, **believe** me, they will not—it would only be to **send** me to New Caledonia, and that would **separate** us more cruelly than death itself.”

“No,” she said, “for I would follow **you**.”

Roland looked at her in silence an **instant**, through the bars that were between

them. "Is this love?" that look seemed to ask. "You would follow me," he said, at last. "Do you know, then, to what you would follow me?"

"To the life of a savage almost," she answered. "I would bear with it until we found means of escaping."

"And you think, then," he said, "that it would not be worse to me than a hundred deaths to see you bearing such a life? Do you love me, that you would do so much for me?"

"Can you ask me, Louis? Are you not the son of her to whom I owe it that I have never felt that I was an orphan?"

"I know that you loved my mother. I ask you do you love her son?"

"Dearly."

"With the dearest love of all? So dearly that if I were free you could consent to be my wife?"

She drooped her head and was slow to answer. "Why need we speak of these things?" she said, at last. "Let us be brother and sister, as we have always been."

“Ah!” he said, “I knew it—you only meant this sacrifice of yourself as an endeavour to repay to the son the debt that you think you owe the mother. Believe me, Bella, you repaid it to her, and more than repaid it, while she was living. You were all to her that a daughter of her own could have been. She said so to me, remember, before she died.”

“She was always all that was unselfish,” said the girl, “as she was all that was affectionate and generous. She knew that I never thought of her kindness to me as of a debt that I owed her; and that all I could do for her I did out of love, and not as seeking to repay that which it was impossible to repay. How could I ever have hoped to repay the debt that I owed her; if I had felt that it was a debt? She knew that I never did feel it as such.”

“She was very much more fortunate in her daughter than in her son,” he answered.

“You kept her alive, as long as it was possible for care to do so, and I—I killed her.”

“No!”

"But my conscience tells me that I did. But she forgave me, and I am dying now myself. Then, it was as a sister that you were prepared to follow me? It was out of sisterly affection, I mean, that you desired to make this sacrifice of yourself?"

"I never thought of it as a sacrifice."

"Not a sacrifice? To go—you, a girl, and rich in Nature's two best gifts, health and intellect—to ruin your health and waste your youth by living wretchedly among savages, on a barren island at the farthest end of the earth?"

"To ruin my health!" she answered. "You forget, surely, that I am not one of those delicate creatures who would die of exposure to hardship like conservatory flowers put out in a frost. I could bear the hard climate and the hard life as well as most men, I think."

"Better; for few men would have your patience, or be so uncomplaining. It is a kind dream this of yours, Bella. It is only women that dream such dreams."

"No," she said; "for it is not only—I

that have dreamed it, or that would aid in bringing it to pass. You would have still another companion in New Caledonia."

"Clifford? Would he, too, banish himself?"

"Is it so strange, then, that he should think of sharing your exile?"

"I don't know. We read that David and Jonathan were close friends, but not that, when Saul banished David, Jonathan went out with him into the wilderness. And, as an insurgent who has escaped trial, it is his life that Harry would risk. He would be shot at once, if he were recognized."

The little colour that had come into her cheek at the mention of Clifford's name faded out again, and left her paler than before.

"You had not thought of that, I see," said Roland, looking keenly at her.

"No," she answered, with an effort, "but we must have thought of it."

"And you would have him go? Would you have him go, now that you know it would be at the risk of his life?"

"I think so. Why not? Yes, I would have him go."

"Then he is not the rival you prefer to me? It is not as his wife that you would go with him?"

"Louis!"

"Ah!" he said, with a bitter change in his voice, "I was right, then, when I feared that you loved him. But it is not his wife that should offer to be a sister to me in exile. You would have done better to have said nothing of this to me, and when I am dead to have quietly married him, and forgotten me."

"Louis!" she repeated.

"Oh, don't fear that I blame you! It is not six months yet, indeed, since you were promised to me, and not to him; but I gave you back that promise; and I would give it back to you if I had kept every condition that you attached to it, now that I know it would be easier for you to follow me as my sister to the very ends of the earth than to become my wife."

"You wrong me," she said; "and yet I

scarcely know what to say to make you understand me better. Do you think, then, is easy for me to forget that if your life is in danger it is because you returned to Paris to seek me?"

"And *you*? What had endangered *you*? And what was life to me if you had been dead? What is it now, if—— Tell me this, at least, Bella—Does Clifford know that you are anything more to me than a cousin? Does he know that I had asked you to be my wife? He has asked you to marry his, has he not?"

"He has asked me."

"And you said that—— But I can see in your eyes what you answered. They are honest, tell-tale eyes; and I liked to look into them once, and fancy that I caught sight of a bright likeness of myself at the bottom of each. I should see his now, if I were to look. So you are to be his wife?"

"I could not go out to New Caledonia as your wife," she answered. "He knows that I could not, and why."

"That there was a time when you were promised to be mine?"

"Yes," she said, quickly, "even that. When he came to Paris the other day, I told him all. Is it enough for me to confess this to you? or must I repeat word for word what passed between us?"

"I deserve to have you angry with me," he answered. "Forgive me, Bella. And yet it is strange that you should be willing to make this sacrifice, both of yourself and of the man whom you love, for me whom you cannot love."

She lifted her eyes to his, and a softness came into her voice as she answered: "I love you with another affection than that I have come to feel for—for him whom we are speaking," she said, faintly blushing as she said it, "but I love you very dearly. Your mother has been mine ever since she took me—a friendless, homeless orphan, to her home and her heart—the kindest, tenderest——" Her voice trembled, and the tears started to her eyes. "Oh, my dearest, my dearest!" she murmured.

red, lifting her glance as if to look into
at heaven where was now the gentle
ature that she spoke of, and dropping it
ain as there came between heaven and
r the cloud of a prison roof. "And
u," she said, with still something of a
amor in her voice, "for years now, Louis,
u have been a brother to me, and so kind
d dear a brother that I have never thought
you or felt towards you as if you had
en other than such by birth. I can't pay
y of the debt that I owe you—such debts
e paid in another world, if they are paid
all; but neither can I forget it or forsake
u. I cannot leave you, and I will not.
will go out to New Caledonia with you—
your sister; and—and if you ask it of me,
e two will go alone."

There was naturally something hard in
oland's face, but it had vanished now as
e looked at her. "I never knew you," he
id; "and you saw it, I think, and felt,
ith your woman's instinct, that I was a
an who would make no woman happy as
y wife. Hark! they are coming to tell

us that the dear hour you have given me is over, and that we must part. Go, my darling, you have given me new strength to die. Ah! if your husband that is to be but loves you as I love you at this moment, how happy you will be in your marriage! Go, my sister, my dear one, we shall not meet again until they condemn me, but you will come to me once or twice again before I pay the forfeit that they are seeking from me, and your sister's love will be the comfort of the little time that I have left to live. I have been a sad shadow upon my dead mother's life and upon yours. It was best you could not love me as I wished, my death would have blighted your young life too much. Be very happy with your lover, sister; as happy as you both deserve to be. Try not to think sadly of that which is to happen to me; think, instead, that death is what I wish and my triumph, and that it is best that they should give it to me. Adieu, my sister, adieu!"

"Louis! Louis!" she murmured, as the door of the kind of cage against the bars

which she leaned sobbing was unlocked
flung back, and an interrupting face
ted in upon her. She raised her tear-
face to Roland's, and their eyes met
a long and solemn look. All the pas-
s that are as mists fled away in that
; and soul shone out on soul, and each
that the other forgave and understood.
re was no added word of parting spoken;
words of parting ever said on earth
ld have spoken like that long, long
.

The next time that the cousins saw each
er, Roland was standing to take his
l before the Third Council of War at
sailles. The court-martial met in the
e d'audience of the Grandes Ecuries
re; and six assessors and a president
le up the military tribunal that was to
ide whether the prisoner might find
oy in martial law or not; and an
ience as numerous as the court would
d had crowded out of Paris to enjoy the
rt provided for them. In Rome of old
blood-wet sands of the arena were



girdled by a "flame of fair faces," then shone out brightest as death came nearer to the wretches who were struggling there. It is written, too, in the chronicles of the Cæsars, that, whereas the men of that day would sometimes take pity on a wounded gladiator who begged his life, the thumbs of the women as a rule were pointed downward at such moments, silently, inexorably demanding that the bloody drama should be played out to the end. In nineteenth-century Christendom, courts of justice have become the substitute for the arenas of paganism; and the prisoner whose life is wavering in the judicial scales not seldom finds himself "ringed round by a flame of faces as fair as any that lit up the amphitheatres of Rome of old. The pleasure of gloating over the pangs of death is not, indeed, now to be had; but the pangs of suspense (thought by many to be as great, or greater), may, with the help of that admirable modern invention, the opera-glass, be studied with delightful closeness. Fashion, as led in ancient Rome by

a Julia or Faustina, lolled languid in the imperial balcony, and from time to time turned gracefully downward a graceful thumb; fashion, as led in contemporary Paris or London by Madame G—— or Mrs. L——, lolls smirking on the judicial bench to a share of which wiggled and ermined courtesy has admitted her, and at intervals gracefully adjusts the focus of her opera-glass to bear on the haggard features that are wrought upon by the uncertain dread of the verdict that the “twelve good men and true” in whose hands is the power of life or death shall presently deliver. The jury retire at last to consider it; and in the gay pause that follows refreshments are brought in and handed round, and “champagne and chat” both gain in relish from the excitement of the hour. Whose shallow cynicism was it that sang or said, “Souvent femme varie”? With eyes as cruel as those with which imperial Faustina watched the barbarian gladiator that lay dying in the arena beneath her, dark-eyed senoras of fifteen centuries later drank in

the delights of the noble shows of burning Jews and heretics that the Inquisition was tireless in providing for the beauties of Holy and Catholic Spain. Four more centuries are all but over now; and the shows of the Inquisition are gone after those of the Cæsars; but the eye with which Paris leader of fashion observes through her opera-glass the effect on the prisoner of that absence of the jury which provoke in her own bosom so agreeable a flutter is as cold and cruel as that of Faustina herself; and, nearer home, Mrs. —, as she feasts at once on champagne and chicken sandwiches and on the torture of the wretch waiting to know whether he shall die or live, is in soul, if not in body, the counterpart of a Spanish beauty of the time of Torquemada at an *auto da fe*.

The eyes that on the 9th of September 1871, watched Louis Roland in the *salle d'audience* of the Grandes Ecuries saw a man whose brown beard, strongly-marked features, and slightly hollow cheeks, gave him the appearance of being some five C

years older than his actual age. His
had fallen on the morrow of his birth-
; and that birthday had made him
nty-seven; but few that judged only by
evidence of his looks would have set
down at less than two or three and
ty. It was a firm face, and a noble,
n, and intelligent one; but it was the
of a man who had certainly suffered
ch. Eyes filled with tears that looked
the prisoner from a seat beside his advo-
e; and Henry Clifford, who had come
r a few days before from England, and
ose presence at that trial would lead, if
were detected, to his own, if he did not
re in this emotion of Isabel, at least
roached himself that he had under-esti-
ted, not, indeed, his friend's strength in
sting pain, but his capacity for feel-
it.

That September day is a shadow now, as
days that are of the past are shadows.
It brings its tragedy or comedy, and sets
forth upon the stage of the world; and
we of us take part in the piece, while



others look on to laugh or weep. Another sun presently rises, and lifts the curtain on a newer drama; and that of yesterday is forgotten. Years, lengthened and ever widening, lie between us and the trial-drama that was enacted on the 9th of September, 1871, in the *salle d'audience* of the Grandes Ecuries; and in them, as though in graves, what plays and players innumerable lie buried! "We are such stuff," says a voice, speaking to us out of the past, and that will continue to speak on for all time of the future, "as dreams are made of." The Commune is but a dream now—a nightmare; and the trials of actors in it are the trials of ghosts. We can, indeed, call the figures in any one of them up before us, if we will—with such magic of exorcism does the labour of the reporter endow us; but the faces will look shadowy, and the voices sound unreal and faint. A faintly-seen face or two, and here and there the echo of a word, are all that one need seek to revive in connection with that buried day of an eventful year that is dated for

and for history by the trial of Louis
land.

On the part of the Government little
dence was brought forward—or, to speak
re correctly, was needed; for already
fore his trial the avowals of the accused
d been singularly full and frank. He
nied no word or deed that could fairly
attributed to him, and accepted unre-
vedly the responsibility of his every
tion. “Roland,” the prosecution were
abled to state, with reference to the letter
itten from the camp at Nevers, “perfectly
cognizes the letter, and declares that in
iting it he fully appreciated the serious-
ss of the act that he was committing as
soldier. More than that, he was subject
the time to no outside influence what-
er.”

When the registrar had made an end of
ading the report in which the case for
a prosecution was set forth, it was with
erence to the Nevers letter that Colonel
erlaye, president of the court-martial,
gan to interrogate the accused. “You



acknowledge, then, this letter to have been written by you to the Minister of War?" he demanded.

The prisoner, "*d'une voix ferme*," as the reports of the trial took notice, replied in the affirmative.

"Explain to us," continued Merlaye, "what it was that led you to write *that* letter."

"*Mon colonel*," said Roland, after a second or two of silence, "I looked on the peace that had just been concluded as fatal to France. When I heard of the movement that was taking place in Paris, it seemed to me that it must undoubtedly turn in *the* end against the Prussians."

"And the National Guard revolting against the regular army was to rid us of the Prussians, then? And an insurrection breaks out against the regular government, and you, a soldier, do not hesitate,—*you* rush off instantly to join it! You *are* intelligent,—how could it seem to you *that* what was taking place in Paris was *likely* to end in the expulsion of the invaders?"

The treaty of peace once broken, there is no hope that the insurrection would become a revolution, and that the end might be the expulsion of the Prussians."

So that," said Merlaye, ironically, "it was not ambition that led you to Paris?"

"It was love of my country," said Roland.

"But, as a soldier, you should know,"

said Merlaye, "that even in the event of success there remains a stain on the honour of him who abandons his flag, and that it is never effaced."

"It is the motive of the abandonment that makes the stain; it does not lie in the act itself. If I had been governed in that way I did by motives of cowardice, or treachery, or ambition, there would indeed be a stain on my honour," answered Roland.

"Was it no stain that you should league yourself with such wretches as those you have fought amongst? As a soldier, was it not painful to you to command such hordes of rascals as the forces of the Commune?"

A slight spasm disturbed for the fraction of a second the composure of the features

of the prisoner, and his cheek flushed somewhat. "Without doubt," he said, slowly, "it was painful, but——"

The Court waited in silence some seconds for the rest of what he would say. At first, the prisoner seemed merely to be searching for words; then his lips closed again, light died out of his eyes and colour from his face, and he looked to the president with a glance that asked plainly enough that the interrogatory should be continued. A great deal may be expressed, however, even by means of such an imperfect medium of speech as a half-uttered sentence that abruptly breaks off in "but." "It was not the means I looked at, but the end," had certainly been the declaration that was trembling on Roland's lips, when, before it could pass them, the grim Present had, as it were, caught him by the throat, and, choking back the unsaid words, had pointed to the tribunal that was about to doom him to death, and had said, sternly, "The end is here."

A great many witnesses, nineteen.

twentieths of them being military men, old superiors or comrades of the prisoner, attended to give evidence in his behalf. They could plead for him, indeed, only that he was a patriot,—misguided—mistaken—but certainly a patriot. He had sought active service immediately upon war being declared with Germany; and on its being refused to him, had declared his resolution to throw up his commission and serve in the ranks; and was on the point of making this sacrifice of his future, when his colonel interested himself warmly in favour of the application, and succeeded in having the young officer sent to Metz. In Metz, he had lived only for the day of breaking-out, and at last had been left for dead in attempting a reconnaissance of the German lines. He had recovered from his severe wound, however; or, rather, had gone, half recovered, to Gambetta at Tours, who had sent him to the Nevers camp. As second in command at Nevers, his high worth as an officer had been manifested equally with his unshaken persuasion that

France could and ought to persist in the war until its fortunes should change. "And if Paris should capitulate?" it had been asked him.

"There are enough of us left to hold out in Auvergne and the Cevennes. These natural barriers that resisted Louis XIV. for so many years would not give way in a moment before the Prussians," he had answered.

It was plainly enough to be seen that the president of the court-martial listened very impatiently to the witnesses for the defence. Whilst General Vergne, commandant of the Nevers camp, was speaking of the effect produced on Roland by the news of the surrender of Paris and signing of the treaty of peace—how he had passed nights without sleep, days without speaking,—how for all ambition he had that of defending his country, "he thought" (the general was sure) "only of that,"—Merlaye sharply interrupted him with—

"We do not deny that Roland showed patriotic feeling, and had gifts. *Dieu merci!*

good officers are not so few in the French army; and the engineers" (to which branch of the service the speaker as well as the prisoner belonged) "have no scarcity of them. But as for these notions of a resistance *à outrance*, an intelligent man like Roland ought to have known that, if some countries—Spain, for instance—can hold out for an indefinite time by reason of their mountains, it is not the case with the plains of France."

The accused answered that the conditions of resistance altered in France with the geographical conditions. "In Languedoc, for example," he said, "one might hold out for any length of time, and exhaust an army rather than an army."

"And you take no account, then," replied the president, sharply, "of the fact that in the meantime the remaining three-fourths of France would be ruined for, perhaps, twenty years to come?" He turned from the prisoner, for whom no more questions remained to be called, and gave the signal to M. le Commandant Garveau, the Public Prosecutor.

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M. Garveau began his address to the court in the weeping words that prosecuting counsel have from time immemorial been accustomed to commence their speeches with, and always deliver, if good actors in a tearful voice. Although the shorthand notes taken at the trial of Socrates have, by a culpable negligence of Plato, failed to reach us, it may be confidently conjectured that the Athenian advocate who appeared against the prisoner, lamented in the outset of his speech the hard necessity that called upon him to demonstrate to the Areopagus that the illustrious 'accused had perverted his abilities to blasphemous and pernicious ends. The crocodile, too, who seizes an unlucky Nubian on the shore of the Nile, would probably, if he could speak, gripe the captive firmly with one paw, and, rubbing the other across his eyes, bewail the unhappy fate that would oblige him presently to put his prey to death. As for the boa-constrictor (a first cousin, in all probability, of the tribe of lawyers—twined about the roots of whose family tree we find

the Old Serpent), it is well known how the creature treats a victim before dining on him.

M. Garveau, then, after having duly lamented the painful nature of his duty, proceeded inexorably to fulfil it. "By his criminal conduct, the accused," he demonstrated, "had betrayed all his duties, as man, citizen, and soldier.

"As a man, in leaguering himself,—he, an educated and intelligent officer,—with wretches who had terminated their enormous crimes with murder and incendiarism; as a citizen, in choosing for committing that reason the moment in which his country, bleeding and exhausted, had the greatest need of the co-operation of all her children; as a soldier, in casting from him the tricolor flag to take in his hand the sinister standard of revolt, already stained with the blood of two generals. . . .

"I end, messieurs," said Garveau, "by adjuring you to apply the law in all its rigour; for the question is one of putting down rigorously the greatest crime that can



be committed against the uniform we have the honour to wear, and of making of this culprit a signal example, that shall secure the army for the future against any repetition of his crime."

M. Albert Jouy, the advocate of the accused, could do little more than plead—earnestly, indeed, and with considerable eloquence—for mercy. "The evidence," he said, "had shown that, whether or not there had been wisdom in Roland's love of France, he had loved her but too well,—loved her better than fame and fortune, and than life itself."

He spoke of the boyhood of his client, sombre, stern, passed in the heart of the Cevennes mountains where a handful of men under the command of his ancestor had resisted for years all the forces that Louis XIV. could send against them,—a boyhood that had made an enthusiast of him, a patriot who at the moment when other men were casting down their swords in despair grasped his but the more firmly, and was ready to lead against the enemy

y who would follow him, and this in the
l belief, not that he should die, but that
should triumph.

‘When Paris falls,’ said Jouy, “and
ice is made, Roland repeats to every one
it in making it we have committed the
or that of old lost Carthage. Resistance
utrance, he thinks, has, on the contrary,
happy fortunes. ‘Let one recall,’ is his
gument, ‘the battle of Cannæ, the con-
est of Holland by Louis XIV., at the head
the four most powerful armies of Europe,
manded by a Turenne and a Condé, and
invasion of Spain in 1808,—all situations
re desperate than ours ; and yet all of
em instances in which a patriotic deter-
nation to resist to the last was rewarded
the ultimate overthrow of the invader.
r need these successes,’ argues Roland,
e termed fortunate, nor are they the
ult of chance ; but rather of the operation
a law, of which one of the clearest pro-
ions is the wasting away of victorious
nies.’

“The 19th of March,” continued Jouy,

“the accused hears that an insurrection has broken out, and is mistress of the capital. ‘It is the rupture of the treaty of peace,’ he cries; and he hastens to carry to a moment that he believes to be patriotic the aid of his talents and his sword.

“I will not speak of the part that he played under the Commune. I will say only, while I point to the interrogatory of my client, ‘We avow all with perfect frankness, perfect loyalty; we disdain to attempt to avoid by means of falsehood and subterfuge the terrible responsibility that rests upon us.’”

With eloquent warmth, and an emotion more genuine than that of the counsel for the prosecution, the young advocate pleaded a cause that he had learned to look upon less as that of a client than of a friend. When every appeal that he could base upon the patriotism of the prisoner, and add to that of the judges, had been exhausted and he had parried with such arguments as were at his command the contention of the Commandant Garveau, that the

ishment recognized by military law for the offence charged against Roland was death, Jouy proceeded to read a letter signed by the officers who had served under Roland in the Nevers Camp, and declaring their collective belief that the young colonel had thrown himself into the whirlpool of insurrection from a sentiment of exalted patriotism ; and then a petition from some of the principal of the inhabitants of Metz, entreating grace for the young officer who had made such earnest efforts to prevent their town from falling into the hands of the Prussians. "You will hearken," he said imploringly to Merlaye and the rest of the judges, "to this supreme appeal addressed to you by those whom your courage has not been able to save ; you will not repulse this hand stretched out to you from the other side of the new frontier that our hearts refuse to recognize ; or will you forget that it is in hoping to pass down that frontier that Roland has been led astray."

"Accused," said the cold voice of Mer-

laye, as the impassioned one of the advocate trembled away into silence, "have you anything to add in your defence?"

As the question was put to him, Roland looked towards the little group of ancient comrades and superiors, whom a common friendship for him had gathered there to bear witness to what he had been in the days when they knew him. "That which is most painful to me to-day," he said, while the emotion that prompted the words trembled for a moment in his voice, and shook its firmness, "is to see myself judged by that army in the bosom of which I was born and my life has been passed." He paused for a moment, and then added, with an effort, "And in whose bosom I had hoped to die."

Merlaye rose, and, followed by the other members of the court-martial, retired to the room set apart for their deliberations. At the end of half an hour they returned into court, and read a judgment by which the prisoner was condemned to death.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE CABINET OF M. THIERS.

HERE, where men sit and hear each other groan."

Leats said it of the world; but in the old men laugh at times, and have been known at others even to sit together and be merry. It is in the condemned cell,

sitting, as it were, in the shadow of death, with eyes lifted to the high bars that let in light so grudgingly, that the palsy-stricken poet goes on to speak of death as it does of a sty seize upon the spirit, and shake it till his words become a cruel truth. In

the month of September, 1871, "Here, where men sit and hear each other groan," would have been as accurate an inscription as have placed above the great gate of the



Central Prison at Versailles as "*Lasciate ogni speranza*" is for the portal of Tartarus; so crowded was the former place of confinement with insurgents whom the triumphant Government intended presently to transport (as it was hoped) to the latter, by means of platoon-volleys delivered at six paces' distance; or, with affected mercy, had contented themselves with sentencing to a living death in New Caledonia, or at the hulks. So many pounds of flesh, duly doomed, and jealously guarded, awaited in every cell the moment for quitting France or the world; and chief amongst that minority of the condemned, whose forfeit was to be nothing less than life, chief in heart and head, in talent and courage, as he was foremost in public interest and sympathy, ranked the sometime military chief of the Commune, Louis Roland.

Among his notes made in prison occur numerous brief expressions of his feelings while thus lying under sentence of death. "My physical health," he writes, after some weeks' experience of the position, "is

slightly affected. A sentence of death is a real illness. I suffer from weariness, loss of appetite, a little fever, and slight agitation. One ends by wishing it over."

It was a brave man who wrote thus; one from whose resolute heart even the torture of the condemned cell could seldom force a groan. After his condemnation the racking suspense of the three months preceding his trial had re-commenced with even increased intensity. He knew that efforts were being made to save him; but he divined that the Commission in whose hands had been lodged the power of confirming or annulling the sentences passed by the various Councils of War (a body cynically styled the Committee of Pardons, and never known to pardon) would inexorably insist that his should be carried out. The number of days which yet remained to him, in that lay all the uncertainty. It lasted through the whole month of September, and when October came, with its wan autumn beauty fading coldly into winter, Roland was still asking himself, as the light of each new day

broke drearily upon him, "Is it to-morrow that I die?" There had been some ~~in~~ formality in the manner of sentencing him, of which his advocate had made matter ~~for~~ appeal, and the sentence had, in consequence, been revised and amended. *pourvoi en cassation* followed, and was rejected; and then legal subtlety had exhausted the obstacles that it could interpose between the law and its victim, and the condemned man lived on only because the Committee of Pardons had not yet decided when he was to die.

Humanity, as we understand the word in England, considers that it is enough, and as some think more than enough, that between sentence and execution even weeks should intervene. In France, in the autumn of 1871, the members of the Assembly who composed the Committee of Pardons took care that the various Communists whom the courts-martial had condemned to death should taste of its bitterness for months before the cup was actually drained; and denied that in doing so they acted with any

especial cruelty. It was not, they pleaded, as if any agony of body had been caused by this long suspense, as if the condemned cell had been one of those torture-chambers of the Middle Ages from the inspection of which we turn away with the Pharisee cry, "Lord! we thank Thee that we are not as were former ages, and that Thou hast made us more merciful than our forefathers." So, too, the hangman, who should place a doomed wretch on the drop, draw down the cap over his eyes, and adjust the noose, and then stand minute after minute, keeping his hand on the bolt, and delaying to draw it, might plead that he was inflicting no actual pain; but what would be the agony of the wretch itself in comparison with that horrible waiting for it? Mezentius, that pleasant member of the family of tyrants, whose acquaintance schoolboys make while following the steps of wandering Æneas, inflicted no actual pain upon a living prisoner when he fettered him to the dead. The Committee of Pardons had, in its turn, improved upon the invention of Mezentius,



and instead of chaining Roland and other Communists to the dead, kept them fettered, month after month, to Death himself.

A brave man, however, can be nobly firm and calm even in a cell where the skeleton figure of the King of Terrors grins at his elbow when he awakes in the morning, and, as it were, lies down with him at night. Even in the earlier days of this ghastly companionship Roland had so fully triumphed over its horror as sometimes to have gay moments and witty thoughts. Of "Timothée," a trifle with the composition of which he diverted himself at this time, a critic very unfriendly to the political and other sentiments of the author has written, "Charming pages, sparkling with wit and gaiety, bright, satirical, and animated ; one would say that they had fallen from the pen of Roland on some fresh morning of spring, when the birds were singing under the lattice and the sun shone in at it, and the heart of the writer was as light and his mood as sunny as the moment. Yet they are the work of a condemned." He who

reads "Timothée" listens, in fact, to a rough at some of the weaknesses of French republicanism, and turning to the date of the *brochure*, finds that it is September 10th, 1871, or twelve days after the writer had been condemned to death.

In recording, then, how Roland bore the long imprisonment that followed his condemnation, his biographer has no bursts of manly despair to chronicle, nor any picture to attempt of a mind smitten down with anguish, and fainting under a burden of awful gloom. Insensible to the nature of his position this man indeed was not, and could not be; for the love of life and the sinking from death that are born of health and youth were strong within him, and led out mightily at times against the body and untimely end to which his enemies were dooming him. Ardent and excited natures, that revel in the double enjoyment of youth and "*mens sana in corpore sano*," will often face death nobly; but do not, if as honest as heroic, profess to do with joy to meet it. Antigone was as

noble a creature as even Greece gave birth to; but together with the story of her heroism, the Greek drama hands down to us the words of her mournful lament that she must die in the morning of life, and without having tasted of its joys. In his turn, a young hero of seven and twenty, dying some thousands of years after Antigone, could write from his prison at Versailles, "I have not lived long enough. I want to work, to think, to act, to love—above all, to love. My lungs are made to breathe for a long time yet, and my heart to beat. It is not natural to die thus." Alas! Roland, it was not a natural or an easy death to die. But it was natural, O gallant spirit! that a courage like yours should so triumph over the terrors of that death as to wring from St. Hilaire, secretary to the President of the Republic, the admission, "Roland is a man whose hand we grasp even while we shoot him."

For it was evident that, if the execution of the prisoner was delayed, it was from no thought of sparing him. The October of

1871 had followed the September into the past, and he had not yet been called upon to exchange his prison for the grave; but by the time that November was also on the wane, the gallant bearing and hard fate of the condemned man were attracting so much admiration and sympathy in Paris that the Government hastily resolved to finish with him. When a man is dead there can be no more cries of "Pardon him!"

Isabel Cameron had felt in old days a sincere and sisterly affection for her cousin, and had appreciated to the full the large measure of his abilities, but in spite of affection and appreciation something in her nature had refused to yield her permission to admire him. The rapid-minded and impetuous girl, who, if called on to act in a time of revolution, would have chosen her part as resolutely as Charlotte Corday and struck as strongly, divined, by instinct, the hesitation in the nature of Roland that left him firm indeed to plan, but always marred at some critical moment of action the exe-



cution of his plans; and that, while it might not, in less unsettled times, have prevented him from attaining to the tactical eminence of a Moltke, closed absolutely against him the more tremendous path of a Napoleon. In the days when he had vacillated between abandoning the half-foundered ship of the Commune, and striking a bold stroke for absolute command, she had almost scorned him. The ship was sunk now as deep as shot and shell could send it; all paths but that to the grave were closed against its former pilot; and, towering up in sudden nobility of mind, he trod this with such perfect and simple courage as to win from her a self-accusing forgetfulness of the past, and the deepest admiration of her woman's heart. In the character of her lover's sentiments there could be no change. Roland had been the friend to whom he was devoted, and the leader that he followed even when the younger of the two men was in one of the prisons of the Commune, and its ex-Minister of War a fugitive from Paris and now that the fortunes of this friend

ere grown so tragic, and through the darkness of the Valley of the Shadow of Death his courage shone with a light so steadfast, admiration grew to devotion, and friendship became an agony of revolt against the death that the hero was to die. He schemed twenty schemes for effecting his escape, and abandoned them one by one as Roland proved to him their utter hopelessness ; he thought himself unfortunate that the share he bore in the events of the Commune had been so slight. Had his name been one notorious in the history of the insurrection, and, therefore, obnoxious to the Government, he would have hastened to retire again to London, and have addressed from there a proposal to Thiers to surrender his own life if that of his friend might but be spared.

In default of the possibility of this sacrifice of life and love both to friendship, and seeing no hope of availing himself of the impetuosity of revenge that the French Government was displaying, he attempted in desperation an appeal to the mercy that it



had not shown. After trying many times to obtain a personal interview with M. Thiers, and being invariably repulsed, he heard, towards the middle of November, that the students of Paris had agreed to plead for the pardon of Roland, and succeeded in having himself included in the deputation of five that was appointed to wait upon the President. In this way he obtained for a moment, and only for a moment, the audience that he coveted.

Thiers was stepping into his carriage at the instant that the five petitioners presented themselves. He irritably refused to listen to them.

"You will only do harm by this step to those whom you wish to save," he declared, with some emotion.

"It is Roland whose life we want," said Clifford, stepping out before the rest. "Give us that, and we ask no more."

"You ask it. In whose name do you ask it?" demanded the President.

"In that of the students of Paris, whom we represent," replied Reybaud, the ap-

pointed spokesman of the deputation, coming forward.

"You represent the students of Paris, do you say? You are very few to represent so many."

"If you don't think us sufficiently numerous," answered Reybaud, "five thousand of us will come to-morrow, if that suits you."

"No," said Thiers, getting hastily into the carriage. "No, no, no!"

"At least, then," urged the young student, "you will allow us, M. le Président, to present to you this petition, signed by the students of Paris, and imploring you to pardon Roland."

"No," said Thiers, rejecting it. "It is too late to talk of petitions. And then, I am not the master. I have no power to let a prisoner go."

"But you let Beslay go," cried two or three.

The aged President looked nervous and bewildered. His secretary thought that it was time for him to interfere.

“You will prevent the Assembly from returning to Paris,” exclaimed M. St. Hilaire. “You will exasperate the Committee of Pardons. Have you not a Republic—what more do you want? If you understood your duty to the Republic, you would not think of asking M. le Président to pardon those who have committed treason against it.”

Reybaud no more than Clifford attended to him; and the two ran, one on each side of the carriage, as it was driving off, praying the President to promise that Roland should not be shot, and obtaining only the reply—

“If I had known, I would not have had him arrested; but it is too late—too late.”

“Perhaps it was as well that he would not listen to you,” Louis said, when his friend came to him with rage and anguish in his heart, and told him of this interview. “He might have offered me life at the price of degradation, and I could not buy it on those terms. You would not wish me to, would you, Harry?”

"I don't know what I wish," said Clifford, except that they would spare your life."

"Ah! if I had been a Bazaine," said the other, with momentary bitterness, "and had betrayed my country, they would have spared me. I wanted to save her; and for that I must die." He paced quickly up and down the cell for a moment or two; and then, stopping close to Clifford, "After all," he said, "what have I to complain of? To die for my country. That is no such hard fate. There are even some who would envy it."

"I will go to every member of the Committee of Pardons. They are younger men than Thiers; they will be more likely to listen to me. I may be able to persuade them to mercy." The speaker broke off for a moment, and looked haggardly at his friend. "Oh," he said, suddenly, "it can't be—it's impossible. Louis, Louis, they will never agree to murder you!"

Roland smiled, as he laid his hand on the other's arm. "You know," he said, "that the Committee of Pardons met nine days

ago, and that its deliberations ended yesterday. Nothing has been made public, you confess, concerning those deliberations. That is to say, the decision arrived at as to myself and the rest who were condemned to death is a fatal one; and it would remain fatal if you had the tongue of a Portia ~~to~~ beg for mercy with. What is it Antonio ~~is~~ says in the play?—to his friend, I mean, and at the opening of the trial scene—~~the~~ he could not be better employed——?”

“ ‘ You cannot better be employed, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write my epitaph,’ ”

Clifford answered.

“ Write mine, then,” said the prisoner ~~—~~
“ it is all you can do for me now. Believe ~~—~~
me, there is no mercy to be had from the
Committee of Pardons. If there had been
I should be dead by this time; not ha—
been left—— ” He stopped himself; and
said, more calmly, “ But it is nearly over
now; what need to speak of the past ? ”

They stood silent for a time.

“ Poor Isabel,” said Louis, as his thoughts

reverted to her ; she bears up bravely, but her looks tell me what she suffers. I remember saying to her, at a time when I had no thought that I should ever be the means of giving her pain, that she would do credit to her hero, Carlyle, if she were ever called on to practise the fortitude he had preached to her. Well, you will make her amends when she is your wife. She will be happy in her husband. I am glad that she loves you, Harry."

"You, who love her," said Clifford, "you can be generous enough to say so?"

"I can say so," he answered, "since I am dying. If I were to remain in the world, indeed, I could only have resigned her to you with a very bitter pang ; but I am leaving it, and there can be no rivalry on the brink of my grave. You will make her happier than ever I should have done ; she will have no rival in your affections ; and my wife would have found me already wedded to two old loves, of the names of Ambition and Patriotism. Hark ! there is old Breuil, the warder, in the corridor, to



tell us that time is up. Good-bye ; the day after to-morrow, if—if the end has not come by then—I will look for you again. Adieu!" repeated Roland, as the two shook hands, his voice choking a little as he spoke—"my brother—my more than friend. Ah! how shall I ever thank my one other friend and you for the love that you both have shown me!"

"And what better death could I wish for?" he presently said aloud, when silence was all that listened to him, and he was again alone. "And yet," he added, a moment later, "how many—how very many things in me are opposed to death!"

To the prison authorities it seemed that suicide was the better death that the condemned might wish for. The end was drawing very near now—they and the prisoner both knew that; and they dreaded lest some morning when they entered his cell to warn him that his time was come, they should find there only a corpse that had cheated the last vengeance of the law. Perhaps it was the very calmness of Ro-

and's courage that tempted them to enter in such fears; to their narrow-sightedness his cheerfulness seemed to be the cheerfulness of a man who laughs within himself to think that he shall presently deprive his enemies of the satisfaction that they would feel in putting him to death. The director of the prison in the end ventured to confide his anxieties to the condemned himself; and even begged him, if the resolution of suicide had entered his mind, to abandon it.

"You would not wish to ruin me!" he said, imploringly, "to deprive me of my position? to blight my prospects? That could be the result, if—if——"

"If," said Roland, bitterly, "so many pounds of living flesh that have been entrusted to your care were demanded of you for the executioner, and you could only offer dead. Make yourself easy, M. de Rolles; I have no thought of committing suicide."

"M. Roland," said the director, much relieved, "I have confidence in your promise."



This confidence, the prisoner found, did not prevent the most trivial precautions from being taken. A careful search of his cell, conducted while he was walking in the exercise-yard, revealed nothing that could by any possibility be turned to suicidal account, further than two small steel needles with which he had some time before asked to be furnished. Even these were now carried away.

A day or two after this incident—it was Saturday, the 25th of November—Isabel, on her visiting Louis, was allowed to see him in the cell where prisoners held interviews with their counsel, instead of being separated from him, as usual, by a double grating of stout wire. The favour had a sinister look; and the two embraced at parting, and murmured words of affection and leave-taking that they feared might be their last on earth. In the earlier week after Roland's condemnation, the same person had only been admitted to see the prisoner on alternate days; and for this and some other reasons that were felt but

not expressed, Isabel and Clifford had never visited him together, nor had their visits been made on the same day. The restriction was now no longer in force, and they might see the condemned man when they pleased; but still each came alone.

“I have comforted mademoiselle,” said the director, returning after escorting the girl to the gate of the prison. There had been some delay in the corridor; and he had waited with her while she leant sobbing against the wall, weeping the bitter tears that she had held back as long as she was with the prisoner. “She asked me questions that embarrassed me extremely. She asked me if I know anything; and on my honour I know nothing—positively nothing. But I comforted her. ‘You will see your cousin again to-morrow,’ I told her. ‘To-morrow is Sunday; and executions never take place on Sunday; the law forbids it. So you may make your mind quite easy.’”

“Ah,” said Roland, “if that does not comfort her, she must indeed be hard to



please. And so, M. de Crolles, you feared, when you saw that we embraced each other at parting, that she might be passing poison to me."

The director started; it was indeed the fear that had been in his mind.

"There has been a search made of my cell," continued the prisoner.

"One must take precautions," said M. de Crolles, considerably disconcerted.

"I thought you had confidence in my word," said Roland. "If not, it was useless giving it; and I will take it back."

"But," protested the director, greatly alarmed; "it would be a bad act, an act unworthy of such a man as you, M. Roland, to destroy yourself."

"Unworthy! Yes, to die the death of a love-stricken barber. I commit suicide!" answered Roland, smiling disdainfully at the thought. "See," he said, taking from his pocket a strip of glass that he had picked up that morning in the exercise-yard, "if I had had any wish to cut my throat this would have been enough." He

handed it to De Crolles. "Have no fear; I shall die in open day."

The other looked at him without speaking.

"Yes," said Roland, interpreting the look, "I know that you have a good heart, and that it would please you better if at some moment you could come to me, and say, 'M. Roland, you are not to die; they have granted you a pardon.' But they mean to shoot me, and you know it, M. de Crolles."

"Ah, M. Roland!" said the director, sorrowfully; and with this ejaculation for a farewell, he went away.

On leaving the prison, Isabel had taken a sudden resolution to seek an audience of M. Thiers. She was suffered to penetrate as far as to the ante-room and the presence of M. St. Hilaire, who peremptorily refused to admit her to an interview with the President.

"Why can I not see him? What prevents him from seeing me?" the girl inquired.



"The business of the Republic," answered St. Hilaire.

"I will stay here, then," she said, seating herself, "until it is transacted, and he comes out. You are a gentleman, monsieur—you will not have me removed by force."

M. St. Hilaire, much embarrassed, looked at her for a while with the air of a man uncertain what to do. "You should know," he said, presently, "that you can do no good by coming here. It is not the President of the Republic that confirms the sentences of the courts-martial, but the President of the Committee of Pardons."

"At least," said Isabel, "the President of the Republic has the power of pardoning."

"No more than I or you," said St. Hilaire.

"I could scarcely believe it," said the girl, incredulously, "if he were to tell me so himself. Do you mean me to understand then, monsieur, that M. Thiers is President of the Republic only in name? I should

not have thought that the greatest of living Frenchmen would consent to hold such a position."

"The greatest of living Frenchmen," St. Hilaire repeated. "If that is what you call M. Thiers, mademoiselle, it is impossible that you can be a Communist."

"Who—I? I hated the Commune," said Isabel, "even before it had threatened to be the means of depriving me of a brother."

"Roland is your brother, then?" asked St. Hilaire.

"In everything but the being born so. We are cousins; but his dead mother adopted me as her daughter when my own parents died; and I have come to love him as a brother. If you take him from me, I have not another near relation in the world." Her hands clasped themselves as she looked at St. Hilaire, and the tears started to her eyes. "Let me see the President," she continued, "let me entreat him to give me my brother's life."

"It can do no good," said St. Hilaire, still half-reluctant, "but——" He retired

without completing his sentence ; and, presently returning, led the way to the cabinet of the President.

A small, spectacled old man, with a face in which something of benevolence contended with other, and less amiable qualities, looked through his glasses at her with eyes dimmed by half a century's study of the signs of the political firmament.

"I can do nothing for you. Why would you not believe M. St. Hilaire when he told you that I could do nothing for you?" he said, brusquely.

"What was I to believe, monsieur ? I cannot believe that you are not President Thiers."

"Yes, I am Thiers ; and, for want of a better man, President of the Republic."

"For want of a better man ! You do wrong, monsieur, to take this tone with me ; it is false humility ; and you know, as well as I, that you are the first man in France, in mind as in power. You will not let my brother die."

"What can I do ?" replied Thiers. "I

am the servant of the Assembly; I am not
he master."

"I have too supreme a respect for you
o believe it, monsieur. You are too great
t man to serve a few hundreds of your
nferiors," the girl said, steadily. "You
uide France, of which you are the right
hand and the head."

"You talk to me as if I were a Napoleon.
Do you not know, then, that we live now
nder a constitutional government; that
France is sovereign, and the Assembly her
oice; and that I, as well as you, must
bey that voice? It has said that your
rother—this Roland is your brother, is he
ot?—is to die; and since it has said so,
I have not the power, even if I had the
will, to save him."

"I know that France is sovereign, mon-
sieur; but I say that the Assembly speaks
falsely, if it pretends that in seeking my
brother's death it speaks for France. Here
is the true voice of France." She opened
a small portfolio that she had brought with
her, and took out a number of papers.



“This is from Metz, this first petition,—from the Metz that my brother tried to save from the Prussians, and that seeks now to save his life; and here are copies of others from Lyons, Marseilles, Nantes, Bordeaux,—all the great cities of France. The Assembly first met at Bordeaux—the Assembly that you tell me thirsts for his blood; but it represents that city no better than it represents the rest of France, for Bordeaux also is petitioning for his life. I do not speak of England, although it is the country of his mother, and is interesting itself warmly in his favour; for England can claim no voice in the domestic affairs of the Republic.”

“You are right,” said Thiers. “No, I am not likely to listen to the voice of England.”

“But you will listen to that of France, monsieur; and I show you that it is on the side of mercy. These are extracts from the principal Paris journals; and they all ask for my brother’s pardon, or, at least, for the commutation of his sentence; and

say, as plainly as their writers dare under a state of siege, that it will be wanton cruelty if he is put to death. Your own heart must tell you the same, monsieur—you, who love France so well, you, who are the greatest of living Frenchmen, cannot think it just that my brother should die because he, too, has wished to do great things for France; and has loved her—not wisely, perhaps—but better than his own life. Oh! if I could but find words to make you understand what has been my brother's love for France."

"Perhaps I would spare him if I could," said Thiers.

"And France also would spare him—France demands of you that a son shall not be taken from her, who has only erred because his love for her was blind. Here is a copy of still another petition; it is from the students of Paris, and, next to those from Metz and old comrades of my brother, it pleads the most warmly of them all. You know how young men plead when they are asking for the

life of a patriot; for it is not a week yet since some thousands of them came round your carriage in the streets of Paris, and entreated that you would pardon my brother."

"And I replied to them, as I now reply to his sister, that I have not the power of pardoning him."

"You can at least assume that power, monsieur; and nine in every ten Frenchmen will approve of what you do. Even foreigners see that, and how completely it is opposed to the will of the nation that my brother should die." She had been searching, as she spoke, among the papers that she held, and now selected one. "May I read to you what the Paris correspondent of a leading English newspaper says?"

Thiers bowed his head, and she began. "'It is curious that, since Colonel Roland's case has been so much discussed here, I have on the one hand never met a civilian who did not express himself strongly in favour of pardoning him; and on the other I have never spoken on the subject to a



military man who did not declare that if the sentence of death passed on this young officer was commuted, discipline in the army would be at an end.' I have read it all to you, M. le Président, because I have yet to learn that under you the army governs France."

"It does not. We live, however, under a state of siege," said Thiers.

"But this state of siege at least does not alter the fact that nine in every ten Frenchmen are civilians, and that all civilians wish my brother to live. I will not speak of the wishes of my own sex; you would say, perhaps, that women are weak and foolish."

"No, mademoiselle," said the old man, kindly, "not if they have minds like yours."

"Ah! if you speak in this tone to me, I shall believe that you wish me to have rope. But I know, too, that even soldiers, whatever they might say of discipline, would thank you in their hearts for sparing a brave soldier like my brother."

"If it rested with me, his life should

perhaps be spared," replied the President; "but I should punish what he has done with New Caledonia."

"For how long would you punish him, monsieur—not for life?"

"For ten or fifteen years, at least, Mademoiselle Roland. By that time your brother would have learned to think less of himself and more of obedience to his superiors in the army; and those are lessons that he sadly needs."

"Ah, monsieur," said Isabel, "it was Bazaine that was his commanding officer, remember. You could not expect him to learn the lessons that you speak of in such a school as Metz. New Caledonia for the best years of his life!" she added, sorrowfully. "You speak of a hard fate, but at least I could go with him, and try to soften it."

"You would go with him!" said Thiers, astonished. "Do you fancy, then, that New Caledonia is some paradise of an island, like those that lie farther north in the Pacific?" he demanded, brusquely.



“Undeceive yourself; the savages are among the most ferocious in the world, and the climate is more detestable than even the savages.”

“I know that it would be a hard life, and that I should suffer much, but not as I do at present,” she answered. “You don’t know what it is, monsieur, to have but one near relation in the world, and to see him condemned to death.”

Her tone, rather than her words, expressed such suffering that tears—the first, perhaps, that had dimmed his sight since he wept while entreating Bismarck to have mercy on France, came into the old statesman’s eyes. “Poor child,” he said, “poor, good sister. But the wound will heal, my poor girl; you will not forget him;—no, no, you will not forget him, I see; but you will find some one else—a lover—a husband—to give that poor heart to, instead of breaking it with thinking of the brother that is dead.”

The girl started forward, and made as if she would have thrown herself at his feet.



“Dead,” she said, restraining herself, “he is not dead—he is not to die till—— Oh! they do not tell me even when he is to die. Tell me, monsieur, when is it they speak of murdering him?”

“I know nothing,” said the President.

“You know nothing—you, the President! But you are the first man in France.” She impulsively gathered together the copies of petitions and newspaper articles pleading for the pardon of Roland, and scattered them at his feet. “See, M. le Président, there is all France asking you to spare him! Have mercy, and give him back to me.”

“My poor child,” said Thiers, “I tell you that I am not the master. I don’t kill him; it is the Committee of Pardons that are bent on having him shot.”

“But you are the President,” she reiterated. “The Committee of Pardons must give way if you said to them, ‘You shall not murder him.’”

“Mademoiselle,” said Thiers, “you don’t understand. It is the Assembly, and no

the President, that is master in France ; and the Committee of Pardons is appointed by the Assembly."

" Oh ! the Assembly," said the girl. " Oh, monsieur, be as strong in will as you are great in mind, and refuse to listen to it. Think that in a year or two there will be fresh elections, and that an Assembly of Republicans will be returned who will thank you for having spared my brother."

" But in the mean time," replied the President, " it is the Assembly that met at Bordeaux that represents and governs France."

" No, M. le Président, it is not the Assembly that represents France ; your heart represents France when it inclines you to mercy. If the mind of the Assembly was the mind of the nation, you would not have had those petitions sent you that ask you to pardon my brother, and the cry of the Paris press would be, ' Kill him.' Do you say that it is only the Assembly that has any power in France ? You are not the great man that I have thought you, if you have



let them take from you the power of pardoning."

"Mademoiselle," said the President, "there must be an end of this. Once for all, it is impossible for me to save the life of your brother."

"But who can save him, then, if not the President? Who is there in France but the President of the Republic that has the right of pardoning?"

"The Committee of Pardons," answered Thiers.

"Monsieur," said the girl, after a short pause, "it is not for the President of France to humble himself, I know; but if your entreaty, since you have not the power of commanding, can bring this Committee to spare the life of my brother and send him to New Caledonia for the ten or fifteen years you spoke of just now, you will be able to think when you are dying that you have given me happiness for life."

"Alas! mademoiselle," said Thiers, "the Committee has broken up its sittings for the present."



"For the present! Do you mean, monsieur," she said, impetuously, "that you have already signed my brother's death-warrant?"

"I know nothing of any death-warrant," replied the President. "I tell you I do not even yet know with certainty that your brother is to die."

A sudden hope glowed up in Isabel's heart and flashed out, intense and eager, from her eyes. "Mercy, M. le Président," she said—and now she threw herself on her knees before the old man, and lifted her clasped and entreating hands towards him; "as you ever felt pity for the pains of others—as you would have God grant mercy to you when you come to ask it of Him—promise me that when my brother's death-warrant is sent to you, you will not sign it."

"Alas! my poor child," said the President, "it would make no difference in his fate if I should promise this to you. The death-warrants are not sent to me—the President of the Committee of Pardons signs them all."

She rose, and stood for a moment as if stunned. "But I will seek the President of the Committee," she said, suddenly, "I will plead with him for my brother's life."

"He could not grant it to you without the consent of his colleagues," answered Thiers.

"Then I will attend at the next meeting of the Committee. You will write me an order that will admit me, will you not?"

"The next meeting. You will be at the next meeting. Alas! mademoiselle," said Thiers.

"For pity's sake, monsieur, speak out. Why do you always say, 'Alas'?"

"You have heard, perhaps," inquired the President, "that the next meeting of the Committee of Pardons does not take place until the 4th of December?"

"The 4th of December. Well, monsieur?"

"Well, mademoiselle," continued the President, after a pause that was one of agony to his hearer, "I fear—I fear very

much that by the 4th of December, as regards your brother, all will be over."

She recoiled a step from him, and stood before him, white and silent. Thiers, looking at her anxiously, presently made a gesture of dismissal.

"Adieu, Mademoiselle Roland," he said, speaking, not unkindly, but with a certain nervousness of voice. He looked, too, at the hand that she was pressing upon her bosom, as if he dreaded to see it menace him with a knife or pistol.

The girl started, and trembled violently.

"And you can do nothing?" she said, as if bewildered. "Can you do nothing?"

"I repeat to you, mademoiselle," said the President, still signing to her to withdraw, "that I am not the master in France. Believe me, then, when I declare to you, with profound sorrow for the pain I am causing you, that I can do nothing for your brother—absolutely nothing."

She wanted to make some reply, but could find no words, nor even the relief of tears. It seemed to her that something strange

must be in her look, and she put down her veil, and turned away. Before she could pass out, she heard Thiers once more speaking to her.

“Remember,” said the President, “it is not I that wish him to be put to death. And then, my poor child, there is just a chance that he may not be shot, after all. They tell me nothing—me, the President.”

CHAPTER IX.

SATORY.

How rapid are these last hours. The perspective of the past and future, how constantly it changes ! I am no longer what I was yesterday ; whole pages, as it were, have been erased from my memory. An air of Mozart has just passed through my brain. Those joyful notes — what business have they here ? Was it I — was it I who knew I loved that air ? ”

Roland paused in writing down his thoughts, and pushed from him the journal which he was committing them. A moment before he had seen plainly round the four walls of his cell, grey and cold the fading daylight of a dull afternoon in November ; now, as the sweet, remembered



music played delightfully in his mind and with half-shut eyes he surrendered himself to its enchantment, there glowed upon him a ravishing landscape, aflame with the warmest hues of the painter whose fire of colour divine Titian and intense Giorgione alone have copied, the Tenth Muse, Memory. By turns dark and sunny, as he had seen them on remembered, breathless July afternoons, there rose and fell before him the billowy hills of the Cevennes, earth-waves, the foam of which was the vine and the olive ; and whose crests were tipped with a golden glory of sunlight, falling upon them from a sky of an azure more tender than even the misty and shining vision that melted away into the far horizon, and was the blue that Heaven has given to the Mediterranean Sea. Among these God-reared altars on which the blood of the Protestants of Languedoc had been spilt in sacrifice, and placed on the brow of a hill lower by a thousand or two thousand feet than any of the mountains around it, he saw rise the grey-white mass of an old château ; trees springing on

every side to thrust themselves between it and the sun, and a cascade of vines rippling down from hill-top to plain, and filling up on either side the whole breadth of the valley below. It was very dark in that château, the sombre, little-lighted, old-world building; and the sunbeams that sometimes hunted out openings in the leafy screen that summer was at pains to rear around it, and danced in like so many Ariels through the quaintly-paned casements, seemed, on finding how gloomy and still were the rooms into which they had intruded, to shrink and grow pale, as if asking themselves whether they had not unwittingly made their way into a tomb. Even this cell that he was sitting in was no darker this November afternoon, than he had seen Château-Roland on many a morning of July; but there never was a time when the old building had seemed dark to him. Faces had shone in it, full of welcome and love, faces that had made its every corner brighter to him than the gayest smile of all the sunny landscape without. As the dream-music played soft



and joyously, and the dream-picture now paled, now brightened, two of those faces, the dearest, the fairest, once more shone upon him, and days long-buried came forth living from their grave, the Past. The one of those faces was confined now, and the other changed and unhappy; but for the moment both rose bright before him, and smiled upon him, unchanged and loving. He saw his cousin, as she had sat playing that air of Mozart's to his mother and himself on a well-remembered evening not many weeks before the outbreak of the war, when Château-Roland had not yet passed away from the race of the hero slain there in the far-off time of the Camisards, and he was spending the last days of his leave of absence in plans and talk of the happy future that was to be. Oh, that air—those faces; how sweetly the dream-music sounded—how lovingly the face of his mother seemed to look upon him. Tears rushed into his eyes and blinded him; and with that blindness, Languedoc with its sky and sun, and that dim room of the old château

where his cousin had played and sung, and his mother and he had listened, faded away as a ray of sunlight might have faded, and all again was grey and void. He stretched out his arms, as if to recapture the vision and gather it to his heart: "Oh, my mother—my dearest!" he said, loudly, and with a sob.

It grew presently darker; and he rose, and took to pacing up and down his cell, stopping sometimes in the corner by the door, where he could not be seen from the corridor outside, pressing his face against the wall, and repeating lamentably to himself, "Oh, my mother—my poor mother!" The heart that was cold now, the eyes that were closed for ever—how he suffered at that moment in thinking that his joining the Commune had caused that tender heart to throb with pain, and those loving eyes to be filled with tears. "Pardon! pardon!" he cried, passionately, "oh, pardon me, my beloved! pardon for the pain that I have caused you! pardon for not having loved you more!" He thought how she had loved



him; no one now was left to love him as she had loved.

The entrance of the warder to light the night-lamp placed in his cell changed for a moment the current of his thoughts; but scarcely was the man gone when they began to flow more wildly than before in the channel of the Past. "Am I really here? Are they at this moment, perhaps, naming the hour that is to be that of my death? Oh, it must be a dream," he murmured to himself, while his look wandered from corner to corner of his cell. "I had dreamt of growing old, of being surrounded by family, of loving, of bringing up children. Of loving—oh, yes! of loving," he repeated, dreamily.

He unfastened his shirt at the throat, and drew out part of a chain hanging from his neck, and attached to which was a locket containing hair. "It will be with me to the end," he said, looking at the locket, and speaking as if to a listener; "Peyrat shall take it from my body when I am dead, and give it to you—and tell you

now I thanked you for all your dear goodness, and loved you and thought of you to the last. It is *hers*—you will wear it in memory of her, and of me.” He replaced the locket, and sitting down at the table, remained long motionless, his face buried in his hands.

It was the evening of Sunday, the 26th of November, and Roland had strong forebodings that his execution was to take place on the morrow. He took up a book after a while, and tried to read. It was Schiller’s “Thirty Years’ War,” a record of Protestant heroism, endurance, and triumph very dear to one whose sympathy with wars made in defence of that religion of which his own heroic ancestor had been the soldier-martyr was not the less intense because his attachment took a patriotic rather than a religious form. He read on from the page at which he had chanced to open; and coming presently to the noble description of the death of Gustavus at Lutzen passionately dashed the book away. “I cannot bear it! Oh, my God, give me

strength to bear it!" he broke out, incoherently. "Oh, to have died in battle!—to have died at Metz or Sedan, even—anywhere, in any defeat—so that it was but fighting for my country, and that the shots that struck me down were not fired by Frenchmen." He took up an old book of prayers, peculiar to the Cevennes; and began reading in it, seeking to calm himself. The words had no meaning to him; after a while he closed the book, and said to himself, aloud and passionately, "But what a mistake it will be, if they kill me. Once I am dead, I am unassailable. Death is my triumph; I have shaken off the bond that binds the soldier to his leader; I have shown that when the leader is treacherous and infamous that yoke may be honourably cast off, and that there are moments when it would be ignoble not to disobey. And yet—and yet——"

"This is certainly one of the days in which I have suffered most," he wrote that night in his diary before seeking that which he believed would be his last sleep before

death. He was awake with the grey dawn of a cold November morning; and dressed himself, and waited for the escort coming for him. Slowly the dim dawn grew into a cheerless day; and as hour after hour passed on he knew that he was not to die as yet. The Government would appoint the execution for that worst time of all to die, the first faint twilight of a winter's morning, when night is still confused with day, and only by a heavy effort can the spirit maintain its control over the body, and through artery and vein the blood creeps cold and sluggishly. Was it possible, indeed, that he was at this eleventh hour to be spared? He started as the thought sprang through him. Had the voice of the people, asking for mercy, prevailed; or had Thiers sought and obtained from "La Commission des grâces de l'Assemblée," a pardon for him? He repeated to himself that he would not accept it if it were conditional, would not buy life, if the price at which it was to be purchased was dishonour.

Early that morning, Isabel and Clifford



had presented themselves together at the great gate of the prison, and had been refused admittance. Not knowing whether the assurance that accompanied the refusal, that the execution would not take place that day, was to be trusted, they waited on where they were; and at last, towards nine o'clock, were admitted, and left to wait in a large, empty cell. Louis presently entered, accompanied by the governor of the prison, M. de Crolles, and followed by two warders.

"May we not be alone?" he asked De Crolles, who shook his head, and answered decisively—

"Impossible."

He ordered the warders, however, to remain outside the cell; and then, withdrawing as far as its dimensions permitted, "Now, I am eyes but no ears," he said, courteously.

When the warders were gone, Roland drew his cousin to him, and kissed her. "And now pledge M. de Crolles your faith that you have not passed me poison," he said, releasing her.

"Ah, M. Roland," said the governor,

“do not prejudice mademoiselle against me, I entreat you. Remember, it is the Government, not I, that suspects.”

“I should be unjust, at least, if I did not tell her,” replied his prisoner, “that you have been everything that is kind to me. You must know,” he added to Isabel and Clifford, “that M. de Crolles is on one side of his disposition made up of the prison director who is responsible for my safe keeping, and on the other of a good friend of mine, who, I verily believe, would rather see me go out from here to liberty than to death.”

“Can you doubt it? It would delight me,” said De Crolles.

“Ah, it is only waiting till the Committee of Pardons are tired of hesitating, and then I shall be set at liberty,” said Roland. “Why do you look at me so, Bella? I am very quiet, I only suffer on your account; it is not distasteful to me to die, and to die as I do.”

“Louis!” said the girl, and then stopped; but the word was such a cry of pain that



Roland stepped forward, and took both her hands in his.

"And you, too," he said, "they are killing you, too, it seems."

"It is so long—so long," she said, as if excusing herself; "and this waiting, and trying to hope and be patient takes away my strength. I seem to have none left since I saw M. Thiers on Saturday—it distressed me so that he should not have the power of pardoning you. He, the President of the Republic! I could not understand it."

"Yes, he has not the power of pardoning; but it is his own fault that he has not. When the courts-martial were about to begin their work," replied Roland, "he called on the Assembly to free him from the burden of deciding appeals against their judgments. He has given the power of life and death into the hands of a few soldiers and deputies, and now he is helpless when they misuse it. You know what he said to Reybaud, 'I would not have had Roland arrested if I had known; but it is too late.' It will be

Later still when he has my blood upon his head." The speaker paused, controlled with evident effort the emotions that his last words had indicated, and added, hurriedly, "But our time is short, and I want to employ it in taking what may be my farewell of you both. My kind, my best friends," he said with strong emotion, and taking a hand of each, "how shall I thank you for loving me, for seeking to save me, for suffering with my sufferings? I have caused nothing but pain to both of you. Forgive me—forgive me!"

"For what?—for being the noblest—the bravest——" The speaker ceased; his quivering voice was no longer under his control. "You cut me to the heart," he said, when he could speak again. "What have I ever had to forgive in you? and why do you say that I have tried to save you? Here is one who has tried to save you—bravely and nobly—as everything she does is brave and noble; but I——! No, you mock me when you thank me; tell me, instead, that you forgive me the little I

“Forgive you for not having stormed my prison and brought me out of it single-handed, do you mean? You have nothing to reproach yourself with,” Roland continued, his tone of raillery changing to one of the most cordial friendship. “Yes, you have done little; but what was there that could have been done? And understand me, my dear friend, if I say *little*, I am speaking only of the success of your efforts; and not of the efforts themselves. I know how hard and uselessly you have sought to be admitted to plead my cause with the Committee of Pardons.” He glanced quickly at De Crolles; and then, stepping up to Clifford, said, in a low voice, “I say nothing of the risk that you have run for my sake for more than two months past—it would be insulting you to dwell on it. You have done all for me that the truest friend could do—more—a thousand times more—than I have deserved from you; and I know it, and thank you for it. Yes, my dear friends, I thank both of you, and love you dearly.”



"I hardly thought yesterday," he continued, "when they gave me the permission I have been waiting for this week past to see both of you where I could embrace you for the last time, that I should be living to-day to avail myself of it. For once, delay has been kind; it brings us all three together—and I wished very much that we, who never were all three met together until this moment, should meet before it should be too late." He was holding a hand of each as he spoke; he now drew the girl gently forward. "Take her, Harry," he said, putting her hand in Clifford's, "love her as she deserves to be loved, and as you can love her, I know; and may you live long together, and very, very happily. And now tell me what your plans are for the future, and where they will take you and your wife?"

"Shall I guess them for you?" he continued, as Clifford remained silent, and deeply affected. "You will leave the Old World, and go to the New, to join your brother."



"Yes," said the other, with an effort, "I have thought of that."

"And your hopes to make a name for yourself in literature?" said Roland, quickly. "Will you bury them, and the talent that has been given you, in the woods of New Zealand? Perhaps, though, after all," he added, "you are making the best choice, in making the humblest. It might have been as well for me, had I—— But we will not talk of that," he said, checking himself.

He took from his pocket a couple of thin volumes, and handed one to each of his cousins. "Some authors," he said, "are prized for the sake of their works, but I want you to prize this little book for the sake of the author."

They were copies of his work, "The Defence of Metz." Isabel opened hers, and found written on the fly-leaf a few words of farewell, and below them some others of Scripture.

"I have one or two other bequests to make," said Roland; "and one of them

of books. I would like each of you to choose from those that were sent from Château Roland at the time we found a purchaser for the old place, such as you could wish to keep in memory of my mother and myself. Isabel will wear this in memory of one who was almost as much her mother as mine," he added, taking from his neck the locket that he wore. "Her air and mine are in it, Bella; and it will remind you when you look at it of her to whom you were a daughter—the tenderest, the best of daughters. And now I have but one thing more to speak of. See, this is my will." He took out a folded sheet of paper, and handed it to Clifford. "You will read it when you have left me, Harry; but I must tell you what is in it—that was one of my reasons for wishing to see both of you to-day. With what remains of the purchase-money of the château, and other matters, I shall leave behind me, as nearly as I can judge, some five thousand francs. I give this little sum to one who has been a sister to me, and who was a daughter to my



mother, as her marriage-portion. You will not refuse it, sister ? ”

“ No, Louis, my dear, dear brother.”

“ Ah ! I always thought you would forgive me. I see now that you forgive me perfectly,” said Roland. “ And you, Harry ? ” he continued.

“ I don’t know what to say,” said Clifford, “ but you will understand me when I answer that it is like you to offer, and like her to accept. But I can’t help hoping, even at this eleventh hour, that we shall all three see New Caledonia yet.”

“ Ah ! it almost reconciles me in itself to death, when I think that it will put an end to that mad, kind plan of yours,” said Roland. “ But I can’t tell you how it touches me, and how moved I am by the love that you both have shown for me.”

He turned to a new comer who had entered the cell a few moments before, and with whom he had exchanged a silent greeting, his pastor, M. Peyrat. “ And now,” he said, “ this dear friend of ours will pray with us.”

They knelt down silently, and remained a long time on their knees. When they rose, they all three tried to talk cheerfully; but they sense that the moment of parting was at hand, and a knowledge not the less painful because no one spoke of it, that they three should not meet again on earth, oppressed them, and made vain their efforts.

“How rapidly these last moments fly!” said Roland. “I wanted to make the most of them—to utter a thousand adieux to you—to talk to you of the happiness that I hope God will give you in that new world of the South; but my brain thinks only incoherently, and my words refuse to come. Perhaps it is the fault of the restless night that I have had; my sleep last night was a very broken one. You gave me a cruel *alerte*,” he added, to De Crolles.

“It was a prisoner in the cell opposite yours who was seized with an attack of madness,” answered the governor. “Did you think, then, that the time of some of you had come?” he asked.

“Yes, mine,” said Roland; “and so I



rose, and dressed myself. And yet, I should be accustomed to these *alertes*," he added. "I have had many of them within the last week or two, thanks to the Committee of Pardons. Every time that the bell has been rung in the early morning, and the great gate of the prison opened, I have said to myself, 'They are coming for me.'"

"Oh, this is worse than death!" said Peyrat.

"It was Cinq Mars, I think, who fell into the hands of an unskilful executioner, whose hands trembled, and who multiplied the blows upon his neck. The Committee of Pardons is such another executioner," added Roland.

Isabel stretched out her hands, as if to keep the words away from her. "I can't bear it! O, God, give me strength to bear it!" she broke out, incoherently.

"Ah, I should not have spoken of it," Roland said, taking her hand. "Don't think of it," he added, "or think of it as a trial that I can easily and cheerfully bear. Let us talk instead of our happy days of the

st—of days in Château-Roland. Will the old place keep its name, I wonder? There are no more Rolands—the race dies out with me—the Rolands of the Cevennes, at least. I could have wished that, while the old house stood, there had been a Roland left to own it. How often I have seen it in my dreams! That room where——” He broke off, and stood for a moment silent. “Ah! the dead can return to the spots that are dear to them,” he said, “I will visit that room again.”

“You must bid adieu to your friends, M. Roland,” said M. de Crolles; “the time allowed for the interview has long been past.”

“Adieu, my brother,” said Louis, embracing Clifford; “be very happy with her.”

“Adieu, adieu, *ma bien-aimée*,” he murmured, as he held the girl pressed for a moment to his heart.

She looked up at him as if to speak, but could answer only with that look and with her tears. “Oh, my brother,” she said at last. “Oh that they would spare you!”



"Ah!" he said, kissing her, "I can never forgive them for having made you suffer. They are tearing your heart, I see —yes, all these cruel hopes and fears that they have made you feel for me have torn your heart. But the wound will close, my poor sister—no one will quite take your dead brother's place—but there will be room and love left in your heart for husband and children." He pressed his lips again to her forehead, and then looked to Clifford. "Take her," he said; "and be sure that you take good care of her. But I know you will, my brother. Adieu, my dearest, adieu! Come to me again to-morrow, if—— Oh, to-morrow!" he added, in a broken voice.

"Oh, yes," said Isabel, "to-morrow! Oh, the time has not come yet to say 'Adieu'!"

The door was opened; the warders showed themselves on the threshold. There was a last exchange of looks, a broken word or two; and then the time both of looks and of words was for ever past; and

two of the three who had just parted were leaving the prison, and the third was lonely in his cell.

The day waned hour by hour, a chill, dull day of November, more dreary than the darkest night. The prisoner spent some part of it in writing down in his journal a few last notes on warfare and the Prussian system of tactics; and then opened the "Institutes" of Calvin, a man whom he revered as earnestly as the impulse of Clifford was strongly to loathe him, and spent an hour in converse with the harsh enthusiast who had no love of his kind and but little fear, and who from his Genevan city of refuge proclaimed the hatred of God for man, and denied His mercy. To-night there sounded something hollow in that drear voice; and he presently turned from it, and found himself listening to the words of One who was as much meeker as he was greater than the murderer of Servetus,—One who did not burn heretics, but was Himself a heretic; and Who said, not "The few are set apart

for eternal life, and the many for endless suffering," but "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." When he had done hearken-
ing to this second Preacher, Roland sought his bed, and lay long awake there, thinking of all the mystery summed up in the one word Life—occupying himself with the various elements of the insoluble problem—vainly seeking to search out where the effect lay, and where the cause. In the midst of thoughts of this kind he fell asleep, and exchanged them for a dream.

He dreamed that a charming summer had favoured the vintage, and that clusters of bursting grapes hung, ripened and heavy, from the vines of the Cevennes. He had won back for France all that the invader had reft from her, and had hunted him from victory to victory until his expulsion was reached and peace; and the day was come now that was to be that of his marriage. To him the bride he had won had been always the fairest of women; but he knew that, in spite of all the grace of



her figure, the pride of hair that crowned her, and the more than beauty of her eyes, another judgment than that of a lover would not account her beautiful. The face was a faulty one, when judged by the canons of the Medicean Venus. To-day, however, its imperfections were redeemed, as he had never before known them to be redeemed; and as she knelt by his side at the altar, the marble of her look was changed to perfect woman; and, transfigured by her soft blush, and the new light of her eyes, her face grew rarely beautiful. Her soul was in those eyes, and the light that it gave to them seemed, he thought, to play round her in a halo, and to make of her something at once divine and queenly. She was a queen among women, and he that she gifted with her hand should have been able to have laid at her feet a crown. A crown he had not to offer her, but about his brow there was bound something nobler—laurels that were deathless, and that he had plucked on battle-fields that had delivered France. And now she



was wedded to him; and they passed out of the unadorned and simple church, and found themselves presently full in sight of a throng of people, gathered from all parts of Languedoc to do honour to the marriage of their hero, and glad with the double joy that France was freed, and that he by whom the mother-land had been delivered was akin to them by blood and birth, a son of Languedoc, and born in one of her old-world châteaux, and cradled in the bosom of the Cevennes. They shouted as they saw him; and then for a moment there was solemn silence, but with the next the crowd had upraised the Hymn of the Marseillaise—" *Le jour de gloire est arrivé.*" As he stood there, his bride beside him, the blue of his native sky above, and the face of his native Languedoc all smiling in the sunlight; and heard as it were the voice of France rejoicing in that pæan; his heart cried out that for him the day of days was come indeed, and that love and glory together could do for him nothing more.

“Liberté, Liberté chérie.” With what fervour they sang it; in what a delirium of welcome, when ten thousand voices had pealed forth the last words of the matchless chant, the crowd came on to press the hands, to throw themselves at the feet of him who had given them back the liberty they sang of. It was a living sea breaking round him; and as wave after wave of it beat up against him, clamouring and joyous, he staggered, and had all but fallen. His bride was separated from him; he tried to follow her, but a grasp had been laid on his arm; and at the effort that he made to free himself the sunshine changed suddenly to blackness, and with that blackness the noise of welcome died into silence, and the crowds that had surrounded him fled away. He raised himself on his arm, and saw round him a darkness broken by the weak glimmer of the night-lamp, and at his bedside the man whose grasp, laid on his arm, had roused him. It was his faithful counsel, M. Albert Jouy, come to warn him



that this was the morning that was to be his last.

"Is it you? Is it for this morning, then?" he asked.

"Alas! my friend," said Jouy.

* * * * *

At a little after six o'clock all was in readiness for the journey to the plain of Satory. Besides Roland, a sergeant of the 45th regiment who had deserted to the insurgents, and the wretch second in responsibility to Rigault for the murder of the hostages, were to be shot that morning. Three of the small omnibus-ambulances that had been in use during the war for the conveyance of those of the wounded whose hurts left them able to sit in them were to convey the three prisoners to the place of execution, and a couple of squadrons of cavalry surrounded them as escort.

"Adieu, my friend, pray for me," said Roland to the painfully-affected Jouy, when the moment was come for parting. He turned from him to the governor of the



prison. "You have a very stern office," he said, "my dear Monsieur de Crolles, and yet the way in which you have succeeded in discharging it merits all my gratitude, and even my friendship." M. de Crolles, too much affected to answer him in words, replied only with a strong grasp of the hand. Of the aged minister from whom he had just received the Communion, Roland did not yet take leave; M. Peyrat was the one friend permitted to be with him to the last.

Gendarmes had been sent to sit with each of the prisoners, and to offer the last indignity of fettering their hands. "It is one thorn the more," said Peyrat, when his earnest entreaty, and the protests of Jouy, could obtain only the favour that the irons should be attached but, as it were, in insult, and to only one wrist of the condemned; "bear this also." He moved forward with the prisoner to the waggon, speaking words of consolation. At the moment when he should have entered it, Roland drew back a step, and looked



long towards the entrance of the prison-yard—long, and with a troubled and yearning look. The face he was seeking for came not, the one adieu that would have been more to him than all others besides was to be left unspoken. It was better as it was—it was better as it was. He stepped quickly to his seat beside his pastor. She was asleep, perhaps, at that moment, while he—— “I am ready now,” he told his guards.

Dully, heavily, the death-carts rumbled through the darkness and silence of Versailles, no other sounds breaking the stillness save the clatter of horse-hoofs, and the clank and jingle of the accoutrements of the cavalry. It was now the earliest grey of dawn; but the moon was still in the heavens, and looked down on a world that was held by the frost in a clasp icy as that of death, and over which the snow had cast a winding-sheet. The dying man met her cold gaze with a shiver. Oh for a last look of the sun! It was as if winter had been in heaven, as well as on earth. But the sun



was still asleep, the sun and—— Her and the sun, he would see them never more.

The aged evangelist beside him was speaking to him from time to time, he knew—speaking of God, and of the mercy of God, of mercy infinite, of eternal life—but he listened absently, and replied he knew not what. Other voices, too, were in his ears, voices that sounded out of the past, and confused the sense of that which the living lips were saying. He fell a-thinking as he listened to them of days of his boyhood, of dreams that he had long ago cherished, of many things that were far away and dead. His will was all the while passive in the matter ; it was not of his own seeking that these last moments of his life were filled up with thoughts of days and things of the past, but only that they rose up never-endingly out of their grave in that Past, and haunted him.

Was that the plain of Satory before him? It was but a moment ago, surely, that they had been still within the town. But there in front were the long lines of troops, some



thousands of them, brought out in the grey of a winter's morning to be the witnesses of his and his companions' death. A moment more—it seemed but a moment to him—and the waggon in which he sat had stopped. He got out; and even as he stepped upon the ground found himself looking at three posts, set up in front of the butts for rifle-practice, and some six feet high, and twenty yards apart. Before each of these posts a firing-party was drawn up. That in the centre was composed, he saw, of men of his old corps, the Engineers; and in the Adjutant who commanded it he recognized an acquaintance—so tender were the mercies of the Government.

He found some difficulty at first in walking, after riding for an hour with cramped limbs through the bitter frost. As, leaning slightly on the old clergyman beside him, and moving with a slow step, but calmly and with head erect, he passed the group of officers who were present, all silently uncovered. He returned their grave salute as gravely; and, without speaking, took his place.



The military secretaries of the Second, Third, and Fourth Courts-Martial presently came forward, and began to read to each of the prisoners the sentence passed on him. He listened for a moment; and in the next had fallen back into his thoughts—starting from them, as if from a sleep that he had snatched, when the reading stopped. He looked round him; and saw the *greffier* fold up his papers and walk away, and at his side his pastor waiting to say “Adieu!”

. . . These few last sands in the hour-glass of life, with what fearful quickness were they diminishing! how hurried seemed the rush of the Time-River to ears in which there now sounded with such closeness the roar of the ocean of Eternity! It was but a moment ago, it seemed to him, that the reading of his sentence had been begun; and now this aged Protestant clergyman and he—the faithful staff that his spirit had leaned upon—were taking of each other a leave that was a “*Domine, in manus tuas,*” and commended into the hands of God the soul that in a moment more would taste of



death. Not that he feared it more near — than far; it was his own hand that drew — out the handkerchief that was to bind his — eyes and folded it with fingers that were — deft and untrembling; his voice did not falter as he begged to be allowed to give himself the command to fire, a favour that was refused him. And now his last look of earth—the earth of his country, the earth that his blood was to sink into—had been taken; and he was standing there before the levelled muskets—perfectly firm; but in his face there must be, he knew, a deathly paleness, for at the sounds of the firing-party taking aim the blood seemed to shrink and crawl, and to gather, inert and chilled, about his heart. . . . Would the signal never be given? Would . . .

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CHAPTER X.

IN MEMORIAM.

It had been declared so confidently by the Paris press that Roland would be shot early on the morning of Monday, and Clifford had been so fully impressed with this foreboding, that the mere circumstance of the condemned man being still alive when Monday night was come had presented itself to the latter almost in the light of a respite. Worn out with emotion and want of sleep, he lay down that night at an early hour, and dreamed that his cousin had been reprieved.

He had meant to be at the prison-gate by six in the morning of Tuesday, but when he woke it was to perceive that he had overslept himself, and that it was already past



that hour. As he hurriedly dressed himself and hastened down, it was with the feeling that, happily, a half-hour more or less could not matter much, for that Roland would certainly not be shot that morning.

"A note, monsieur," said the concierge.

It was dated "Tuesday, 4.45 a.m.," and said merely, "Lose no time in coming, if you would see our friend again alive. Th. Peyrat."

"This was brought?" he asked.

"An hour ago," replied the concierge.

"And you did not at once bring it to me!"

"Consider, monsieur, that——" But the other was already out of hearing, and the rest remained unspoken.

"You are too late," said M. de Crolles to him, when he presented himself, breathless and trembling, at the prison; "they are half way to Satory by this time."

"To Satory! The road to Satory?"

"Across the Place d'Armes, and past the Cathedral, and the Bishop's palace. But, my poor fellow," added the governor, "don't

you think that it will be better for you not to follow them?"

"Thank you," said the other, not attending to the question. He sprang out at the prison-gate, and running full speed across the Place d'Armes, halted for a moment to gather breath, and make certain of his route. Before him rose the dark mass of the Cathedral, and catching sight of it, he sprang on again, and hurried up the long Rue de Satory in a desperate race with Death.

By the time that he had panted up the steep ascent in which the town of Versailles ends on the side of Satory, and was come out on the plain, the grey, dim dawn was giving place to the pallid and feeble light of a corpse-like day of November, the last but two that would be born to the expiring month. He saw by that faint light a bare stretch of ground, on which ten thousand horsemen might with ease have exercised, and in the distance black and shadowy masses, looming indistinct and sinister through the morning fog. These, when he



was nearer to them by some hundreds of yards, began gradually to present themselves as lines of troops, drawn up to form three sides of an oblong, and having on the fourth—— Nothing but the mist was to be seen upon the fourth; its curtain-like folds were drawn between him and whatever preparations might be making for the tragedy that was presently to be acted there.

He was still running desperately forward, he knew not well where, or with what object, when fire flashed suddenly through the haze before him, and then followed the angry and deadly ring of the volley of execution. He staggered at that discharge, as if the death with which it was winged had struck him also, and coming instantly to a stop, threw his arms out with an inarticulate cry, and looked first into the smoke and mist that floated in a cloud beyond, and then despairingly up into the thicker clouds above, as if reproaching unseen Heaven for having consented to this death. A great distance still separated him from the place of execution; but he was



near enough to hear, although faintly, a pistol-shot that followed the volley, and then another. The *coup de grâce*, then, was being given—and to whom? He sickened at the thought.

As he stood thus unnerved and faint, the formation of the lines of troops drawn out in front of the Satory rifle-butts began to alter; and then military music clashed out, loud and stirring. The men were commencing the return march to their quarters. Their tread was not, however, slow and heavy; nor was it a dirge that gave forth its wailing notes over the comrade who had fallen gallantly. At quick step, and to the lightest, merriest airs, regiment after regiment filed past the bullet-splintered posts and the corpses outstretched bleeding at the foot of them; and so, to dance-tunes and other laughing music, passed on across the plain, and away from the three who were left lying dead.

* * * * *

Going next morning to collect Roland's papers, in accordance with one of his fare-

well wishes, Clifford came presently upon the fragment of a diary that the dead man had kept during the last weeks of his life. The concluding entry in it came as an interruption to some criticisms of German military tactics, and had evidently been inserted on the day before his death. "How many fragments—how many interrupted undertakings—how many incoherent notes I leave behind me. I hope they will not be made known, or if they be made known, that it will be remembered that I died young."

"Ten years more," the reader thought, laying down the paper, "and he would have been a Moltke. Oh, the blindness of France that let them slay him! It was only he in all her army that saw clearly that the watchword of German greatness is 'Delenda est Carthago;' and that a day must come—not to-morrow, not next day, perhaps, but it will come—when the struggle that has been interrupted for a moment must be fought out to the death. She will be very sorry yet that she let them murder him."

The French capital being still proclaimed in a state of siege, its press dared only condemn in very guarded terms the deed done on the morning of the 28th of November at Satory. In England, where political criticism is as free as the air her people breathe, and public sympathy with Roland had been intense, and the indignation excited by the savage cruelty that had kept him lying for nearly three months under sentence of death, only to carry out that sentence at last, was vehement and bitter, the press, on the contrary, gave loud-spoken expression to both sentiments, and reproached the French Government with being at once bloodthirsty and timorous, and forgot the errors of the dead man in speaking with admiration of his courage and patriotism, and with pity of his fate. "Nil mortuis," tritest of all classical adages, and faded with the wear and tear of so many centuries, grew fresh and true again in presence of that bloodstained grave into which the erring, gallant young soldier had gone down with such calm and unpre-

tentious courage. Nothing lived after him, in England, at least, but praises of his abilities, gallantry, and patriotism, and regrets that France should have permitted a light, which might have burned so brightly for her, to be so cruelly and early quenched. "The bullets," said one leading organ of public opinion, "that, more merciful than the delays of the Committee of Pardons, went straight to his brave young heart, and saved him from the *coup de grâce* inflicted upon the two who shared his fate, deprived his country of an officer who, more completely than any other of the French army, appears to have grasped the truth that war is now a science, and who gave evidence of possessing a tactical ability that would have enabled him, had he lived, to have turned that recognition to exalted account." "In Roland," said a second and equally-influential newspaper, giving utterance to a thought that had not occurred only to Clifford, "it is possible that France has lost her Moltke."

In saying that nothing lived after Roland

in England but admiration of his high qualities and pity for his fate, and that his adherence to the Commune was forgotten in the consideration of the price that he had paid for it, a solitary exception must be made. Mr. Archer Munden, writing in the journal that he now owned, endeavoured to undeceive the press, of which he was so shining an ornament, concerning Roland.

“We cannot for the life of us understand,” he declared in the course of his editorial remarks, “what some of our contemporaries can find in the character and conduct of this very unpleasant individual that should lead them to regret his having met with his due at Satory. He died game, it is said; and so, perhaps, he did; though for our part we shrewdly suspect that the ‘gameness’ was assumed, and a *rôle* that he found it very difficult to sustain at the last moment; and that without the support of the clergyman who attended him, his trembling limbs would have refused to carry him to the place where he stood to be shot. But if we are

to forget what a man's crimes have been, in consideration of his not behaving with absolute cowardice in the hour of their punishment, we may as well begin by writing elegies at once on almost every hero of the Newgate Calendar.

“Mr. Hodgson Sprott, the brilliant and popular author of the ‘Bloomsbury Ballads,’ will describe in his forthcoming volume, ‘My Experiences under the Commune,’ the merciless treatment to which he was subjected in the prison of Mazas, where he was confined by order of Roland, for no other crime than that of being from March to June of the present year the Paris correspondent of this journal. When the vindictive cruelty with which the wretch contrived to keep the mind of his victim in suspense, by renewing again and again a threat of shooting him, and the brutal insults that he heaped on the unhappy and courageous wife of the prisoner, who went daily to the Ministry of War to plead for her husband's release, shall have been described by Mr. Sprott, few Englishmen, we venture to



prophecy, will any longer care to cherish the fond illusion that the deserter who has just been shot at Satory was either a brave man or a chivalrous.

“It is an ungracious task to be compelled to say hard things of the dead; but when such a creature as Roland is represented by more than one leading organ of English public opinion as a misled hero and patriot, we feel that we must do our duty, and speak out. We would gladly have let the ruffian rest in peace, had his admirers suffered us to do so; but since they insist upon our shedding over his grave the tears due to a hero, we must plainly declare that he was none, but a deserter, traitor, and ruffian (looking at his behaviour while War Minister of the Commune, one is tempted to add a coward also); and that the French Government have done their duty in putting him to death.”

“Sic semper Munden!” commented Lord Ralston (then at Naples on his bridal tour), after reading the foregoing to the charming woman who had accepted such heart as was

his to offer her, and had given hers in exchange; or, if not her heart, at least her grace, high-breeding, and remarkable beauty.

CHAPTER XI.

WITH WHITE WINGS SPREAD.

It was the April of 1872; and the brightest and softest of spring noons—a day so fair that, clothed with its beauty, the land grew Eden and the sea a dream—had come down sunnily out of heaven, and lay like a smile upon the face of England. From the deck of the *Southern Cross*, bound from the Thames with passengers for New Zealand, was to be seen a distant line of vivid and gleaming white, the cliff-line of chalky Kent, shining, a stately bulwark, up from the sun-kissed and shining sea; that now was of a colour neither blue nor grey, and anon would lift wave after wave, as if entreating the eye to drink for a moment of the foamy light of their translucent green.



Eyes were replying to that appeal from the deck of the *Southern Cross*; eyes that at one moment watched the green light play and shift along the changing surface of the sea, and in the next had turned from it to meet the love-light sparkling in other eyes beside them, and to yield back a shining answer of their own.

“What a cool, clear green! I remember to have seen the sea looking just like that when I was a girl in Scotland, and went one summer to the Hebrides,” said Isabel Clifford.

“Looking better, you mean. The sea, like everything else, must surely be at its best in Scotland,” her husband answered.

“It *is* at its best off the Hebrides; although it would be too much to expect an Englishman—and especially one who has never seen either Scotland or the Hebrides—to admit as much. I wonder,” the girl went on, “if I shall ever see my native hills—the Inverness ones—again.”

“If we live and thrive, you shall. Let us live to make our fortunes in the islands that

we are going to, and we will come back to spend them and the decline of our life in the island where we were born."

"Ah! it would look another Britain then, than the one we lived in when we were young. I hope, though," the speaker added, "I shall live to see it again, however old and grey I may be when we return."

"I'll send you home again when I grow tired of your company, if that will satisfy you," Clifford said, laughing.

"*Have* you tired of it?" she asked.

"Not yet," he answered, while his eyes and hand sought hers.

They stood silent for a time, looking dreamily out to sea.

"Do you see a bright white streak, quite low down in the horizon?" her husband asked presently.

"I see it—it looks like land," she answered, looking where he pointed. "Is it the French coast?"

"Yes, a distant sight of it; but as near a one as I would ever wish to have of France again."



"Oh, no, Harry," she said, softly; "for it is in France that *he* has his grave."

* * * * *

They were far past Dover when the twinkling streak began at last to pale and fade, and presently was on the point of disappearing.

"Adieu!"

"Adieu!"

It was not to the land that they said it. The young man's hat was off as he spoke; and in the eyes of the girl beside him there was a look of prayer. Presently Clifford spoke again—

"We gave him the best that we could give," he said, "all that there was left for us to give him—a grave at his mother's side in the earth of the Cevennes."

"And prayed that nothing might ever disturb it; and that the noble heart we laid there might for ever be suffered to rest in peace," Isabel answered, her voice breaking as she spoke.

"For the sake of its love of France. If I had thought of it," her husband said,

quickly, "that should have been written in his epitaph."

Dreamland has its voices ; and as I lay down my pen and my thoughts wander across far seas to the Southern Hemisphere, one of those voices darts to my ear, and whispers in it that Clifford and his wife will certainly not return to Europe yet. The young man has thriven in the lovely land that he went to ; and he and his brother—"Happily married," puts in a second whisper, "to an old love of his who left England years ago to join him,")—are both greatly attached to the country of their adoption. The elder, indeed, is one of the most prosperous and sagacious residents in all the district of W—— ; and likely one day to represent it in the New Zealand Legislature. The single infusion of bitterness into the cup of health and happiness that the Britain of the Southern Seas has filled for the two brothers comes to them from the land that they have left ; and its presence is most keenly felt when in the



English newspapers that reach them from time to time, they read, as sometimes happens, of brilliant stage successes won by their sister Daisy. Of the three daughters born to the elder brother (the other has now two sons; their names being Louis and Henry), there is none, says my voice from Dreamland, that bears the sweet name, Margaret.

And then the whisper dies away—away into the phantom world that it was spoken from; and the faces, sad or smiling, that were gathered round me vanish, swift as ghosts at cock-crow, into the blackness beyond the Styx. Regretfully, as though some strange manner of death were taking dear friends from me, I awake, and bid farewell to my dreams.

THE END.





10/10/10

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